

**Embracing diversity and multicultural education in Ontario's separate
schools: Challenges and opportunities**

By

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Declaration

I declare that *Embracing Diversity and Multicultural Education in Ontario's Separate Schools: Challenges and Opportunities* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed:



Date 10th October, 2017

Stanislaus Chukwudiebube Ilo, Researcher

Dedication

This work is dedicated to the following friends who supported me at a very difficult point in my life as I was working on this thesis:

Kathleen Skerrett

Rose Egolet

Linda Ncube

Will Mamah

Leo Ilechukwu

Basil Okeke

Sly Achonam

Ngozi Eneh

Barry Eneh

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List of Abbreviations:

AQ: Additional Qualification

CDSB: Catholic District School Board

CEIE: Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education

EIE: Equity and Inclusive Education

EQAO: Education Quality, Accountability and Equal Learning Opportunity

ER: Equity Register

ESL: English as Second Language

GSA: Gay Straight Alliance

GTA: Greater Toronto Area

IAT: Implicit Association Test

ICE: Institute of Catholic Education

IEP: Individual Education Plan

IPP: Individual Pathway Plan

LGBTQ: Lesbians , Gays, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer

OCSTA: Ontario Catholic Schools Trustees Association

OECA: Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association

OSSLT: Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

RE: Religious Education

Separate Schools: Term for publicly funded Catholic Schools in Ontario

SIC: Structural Identity Consultation Theory.

SLIP: Student Learning Improvement Plan.

Abstract

This research examines the challenges and opportunities of implementing diversity and multicultural education in faith-based Catholic high schools in Ontario, Canada which meets the requirements of both the Equity and Inclusive Education (EIE) and the Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education (CEIE). The data for this research were generated through interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholders—teachers, parents, students, educational assistants and educational administrators at the Catholic District School Board and the Community of the Beloved Catholic High School. Based on data analysis and review of literature in the areas of equity, inclusive education and multicultural education, the current research identified the school culture as the most decisive component in realizing the strategy for inclusion and safe schools required both by the EIE and the CEIE. The fundamental challenge identified by this research is that multiculturalism and diversity are fairly broad sets of values, programs, and projects in Canada which offers challenges in understanding what educational strategies and approaches for realising them in faith-based schools. In addition, this research found out that Catholic schools and boards of education have become sites for conflict and tension in the understanding, interpretation and application of what different stakeholders understand and implement about equity and inclusion. The current research discovered that this tension is an opportunity for the Catholic schools to create a new identity through a greater commitment to ‘real encounters’ between teachers and students which place a greater accent on the cultural and personal experiences and social location of students. This research proposed that the separate educational system in Ontario needs to discover new ways of meeting the challenges of multicultural education. The research recommended how such new ways could draw from the rich social teaching resources of the Christian tradition with regard to options for the poor, and from recent studies and innovations in critical theories of cultures, pedagogy and educational policies and programs in pluralistic societies. Such a new approach will be broad enough to integrate diverse interpretations of diversity and multiculturalism in Canada, and specific enough to model effective pathways for meeting the needs of students and the goals and priorities of a safe schooling culture within a specific faith- based setting.

Chapter One

Orientation into the study

1.1 Background to the study

The central issue in public education in Ontario today, especially in publicly-funded Catholic schools (called Separate Schools), is how to implement the equity and inclusive educational (EIE) strategy of Ontario's Ministry of Education. Within the faith-based schooling in the Catholic educational tradition in Canada, multicultural education has come under the purview of social justice especially in line with the social teaching of the Catholic Church. Each Catholic school and all schools within the board have social justice committees. These committees act as a resource-base for articulating board-wide policies, curricular and extra-curricular programmes and practices for realising the provincial expectations and strategies of inclusion for equity education in schools.

In faith-based schools in Ontario, the social justice approach focuses mainly on closing the achievement gap, especially among children from low-income families, students from visible minorities (that is students from First Nation, Aboriginal, Black, Muslim, Asian and immigrant communities), special needs students (that is students with learning difficulties and disabilities) and those with same-sex attraction (that is LGBTQ students). The strategy is to create: an inclusive and welcoming school culture and safe schools; the introduction of diverse, contextual and more personalised pedagogies tailored to the particular needs of students; and which reflect their everyday experience. There are also steps to adopt a subject-based learning which is aimed at the particular learning styles and cultural context

of students. These steps are taken with the aim of overcoming the limitations of the hidden curriculum. In addition, they are aimed at addressing the mainstreaming of teaching and learning reinforced by a mono-curriculum which is based on some social hierarchies and regnant Western epistemologies which are perceived as the cause of social injustice and social reproduction among minority groups in Canada.

However, the mission of faith-based education in Ontario's Catholic schools is still grounded in confessional narratives drawn from traditional sources of information and validation like scripture, dogmas, Catholic philosophy of education and Catholic beliefs and practices. These are often seen as limited as social tropes for reconstructing the social order and for a holistic social transformation and social mobility for students. Furthermore, there is some imprecision on what is social justice in curriculum documents, as well as a lack of clarity about the concepts and categories associated with social justice like common good, poverty, justice, human dignity, equity, inclusion, recognition, distribution, human rights, freedoms, democracy, and so on. Razvi argues (cited in Bettez & Hytten, 2011: 9): "The immediate difficulty one confronts when examining the idea of social justice is the fact that it does not have a single essential meaning—it is embedded within discourses that are historically constituted and that are sites of conflicting and divergent political endeavors." Is social justice all about what the state does or is it about what individuals, organisations or faith groups or educational boards define in their programmes and policies for multicultural education? Is the faith-based approach to social justice legitimate because it is grounded on religious narratives and doctrines or is it to be judged by the learning outcomes of the practices embedded in their approaches to multicultural education? There is thus a strong argument between libertarians and welfarist, liberal individualism and market individualism as well as social democratic theorists about the claims of the individuals vis-à-vis their rights with regard to what is due to them by virtue of their efforts and what they receive from the state by virtue of their citizenship and the relationship between them (cited in Bettez & Hytten, 2011: 9).

Thus, the nature of educational practices for equity and multiculturalism in faith-based schools through social justice committees reflect a diversity of perspectives and experiences.

This is so because the question of how to order society or schools towards closing the achievement gap, and how to channel each student towards achieving their ultimate abilities and accessing the social ladder for mobility, cannot be housed in any homogenous theory or praxis from boards, ministries of education or faith-based schooling. In a world of diversities, there is need for a hermeneutic of multiplicity in the social construction of the mode or models for achieving a just and equitable schooling. This is for all intents and purposes the achievement of historical sociology and the cultural turn presaged by post-modernity after the horrors of the Second World War, colonialism, racism, apartheid and neo-liberal capitalism. The social justice movement is strong not only in faith-based schooling but also in public schools. The schools themselves offer contrasting narratives of experiences and pedagogies which need to be understood in any research, and recommendations on embracing the challenges and opportunities of multicultural education in faith-based schooling in Ontario. An understanding of the history of this educational reform will give some insight into the background for this study.

On June 4th 2012, the Ontario Provincial Parliament (2010) passed Bill-13, the *Accepting Schools Act* which was designated as an anti-bullying legislation. This law provided strong guidelines for realising the province's inclusive education strategy. This new legislation requires that all publicly-funded schools must allow students, especially gays, to form and give a name to gay clubs in their schools. The goal of the legislation is that all publicly-funded schools should create an inclusive school culture which will support the holistic development of each student without regard to sex, sexuality, color, religion or gender. This proposal caused considerable political and public tension, especially among the proponents of faith-based schooling. The argument was that the government should not impose a gay culture on faith-based schools or deny them the religious freedom to determine how best to create room for those with alternative life styles. What is at issue here is that the separate school system in Ontario, because of its very nature, has significant challenges when it comes to meeting the requirements of diversity and equity within a multicultural educational framework regulated and designed by the state. This challenge plays out in the rich cultural diversity of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and the schools in the area.

In order to appreciate the nature of this central issue, it is necessary to understand the evolution of the problem. Historians, McGowan and Dixon (1998), write that full funding of Catholic education by the government of Ontario was realised on June 24, 1986 with the passage of Bill 30. Catholic schools had long existed as small catechetical parish schools in the then Upper Canada. However, according to Mark McGowan and Robert Dixon (1998: 2) the first pioneers of Catholic education going back to 1891 never anticipated when the first partial state sponsorship of Catholic education was realised in 1841 through the School Act for the United Province of Canada, that comprehensive state sponsorship of church schools would be a reality in the future. McGowan and Dixon (1998: 2-3) argue that, “the passage of Bill 30 in 1986, its successful defense through the Ontario and Canadian Supreme Courts, in 1986 and 1987, and the unquestioned stamp of approval given Catholic schools by the Begin-Caplan Royal Commission, in 1995, appeared to mark the final entrenchment of a distinctive Catholic separate school system in Ontario.” The implication of Bill 30, according to McGowan, was that it unified the administration of Catholic education at primary and secondary school levels under Catholic (or separate) school boards. Secondly, Catholic schools in the province were fully funded by the government. As a result, parents of students who attend Catholic schools were no longer required to pay tuition for their children, as was the case before full funding. Thirdly, Catholic schools received full funding from the government and thus were able to provide for the resources needed for the Catholic faith-based schools, which helped to maintain the same standard in both teaching resources and student educational success support system comparable to the public school boards. McGowan also notes that all teachers in Ontario’s Catholic schools had similar conditions of service, salaries, and professional development support as their counterparts in the public schools. Brian McGowan (1996: 21) contends that for most commentators on Catholic education, the passing of Bill 30 was “an unqualified good” because the additional funding equipped teachers and educators in Catholic schools to continue to deliver Catholic education as they did in the past with better educational resources and teaching aids supplied by the government of Ontario.

Government funding, however, brought with it considerable tension and challenges for maintaining the autonomy of the Catholic schools in terms of curriculum and staffing. In a Pastoral Letter, *This Moment of Promise*, issued in 1989, the Ontario Catholic Bishops (1989:11) said: “even though the financial viability of Catholic schools has been guaranteed, the task remains of ensuring their Catholic character.” There have been considerable changes in the school system, the curriculum, the aims of education and staffing in Catholic schools since Bill 30. In a report, “Background to the Current Situations in Catholic Education” commissioned by the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops (2003), five challenges were identified which face Catholic schools in Ontario at all levels, namely:

- Professed and ordained religious men and women became a diminishing proportion of school staff.
- With lay staff and lay trustees, there tended to be a greater distance between the school and the parish. In some cases, teachers and trustees took different positions on issues about Catholic education from that of the official church position.
- Larger boards became more and more self-sufficient and tended to consult less with the dioceses.
- Teachers from different faith traditions and jurisdictions came into the Catholic school system.
- Larger boards and trustees led to more negotiation which bureaucratized the managing of the Catholic schools, leading to all kinds of legal frameworks and amplified by complex negotiations and agreements.

The most significant challenge that this arrangement posed, according to the Institute of Catholic Education’s document, *Curriculum Matters: A Resource for Catholic Educators* (1996), to Catholic educators is that of maintaining a distinctive character and faith component to Catholic schooling. Catholic educators are often faced with a double burden, that of “writing programmes and producing curriculum materials for an educational field in the midst of dramatic change, as well as determining what makes the curriculum Catholic and, therefore, distinct from that of the public schools” (ICE, 1996: 7). The Ontario Ministry of Education (1995: 4) produces a generic curriculum policy document and graduate outcomes for all

students in the province, which aim at meeting the learning needs of a changing society. The Ministry's curriculum's "one size fits all" policy is value-neutral. Even though representatives from the Catholic schools are usually invited to the process of formulating the curriculum, no explicit reference to the distinctive religious or Catholic character of schools is integrated in the curriculum documents proposed; it is usually left to the Catholic boards to figure this out for themselves (ICE, 1996: 7). The Catholic school adapts these goals within a Catholic context through the Catholic Common Curriculum (Trafford, 1998: 3-4). The Catholic curriculum is written with the aims of Catholic education in mind.

All Catholic schools in Ontario have a common curriculum developed by the Institute of Catholic Education. However, each school applies the curriculum to its specific context following the board policies, with a view to realizing the graduate expectations at each stage in the child's educational process. The Catholic schools in Ontario are conceived as agents of evangelisation and as such "participate in the broader mission of the Church in making disciples of all nations" (Institute for Catholic Education, 2002: 1). They are presented as centres where the students are led into discipleship, where they are handed on the faith and tradition, and educated in an integral way in a community of faith that bears witness to the values of the Gospel and the life of Christ (Institute for Catholic Education, 2002: 1).

However, the most challenging aspect of the existence of the separate school system in Ontario today is the question of diversity and multicultural education. Faith-based schools are usually considered as confessional and catechetical in nature. A random survey of Ontarians conducted by Forum Research Inc (Forum Research, 2012) shows that 53% of Ontarians were against any government funded faith-based schooling. The core argument of opponents of the public funding for Catholic schools is that Canada is a multicultural country; hence government should not show preference for one religion in terms of funding. Many people also argue that faith-based schools have no place for minorities (Blacks, Aboriginals and LGBTQs for example), since they prioritise mainstream schooling without considering cultural modeling of students, diversity and the pervasive effects of the hidden curriculum which reinforce unwholesome social reproduction. One thing, however, is clear:

the existence of publicly-funded faith-based schools and the existence of a province-wide equity and inclusivity strategy in Ontario have not resolved the challenges and opportunities presented for the education of children from an increasingly multicultural and culturally diverse Canadian society. This is why I have chosen to conduct this research focusing on the challenges and opportunities of equity and diversity education in one of the biggest faith-based educational board in Canada, the Catholic District School Board.

This research is a naturalistic qualitative approach which will use ethnographic tools to identify, explore and describe in a thematic way, the challenges and opportunities of implementing a faith-based multicultural education in Ontario. I have chosen one high school in a Catholic District School Board for this study. This high school (Community of the Beloved) has been identified by the school board as representing the best picture of the diversity of the Greater Toronto Area in terms of their diverse demographics, institutional multicultural priorities and programmes and the pluralistic constitution of their teaching and administrative staff. This school is also among the first high schools to fully integrate in their programme and pedagogies the Catholic school's multicultural and equity strategy. It has a student population of over 800 and a teaching population of 150. Community of the Beloved High School thus offers me a good field area for harvesting sufficient data to analyse the central phenomenon under consideration. The central phenomenon under consideration is diversity and multicultural education in a faith-based setting, as understood through the board-wide strategy developed by the social justice committee and the bureau on safe schools and equity and diversity education, and as implemented in all high schools under the separate school system.

I used the instruments of interview protocol (individual and focus group) to generate information on the challenges and opportunities in the development of equity and inclusive programmes in faith-based schools. I also participated in social justice activities and programmes in the school, and observed the school culture over a period of three months in order to further gather data for my analysis. Focusing on Community of the Beloved offered the opportunity to comparatively understand, explore, explain and describe the

complexities of the challenges and opportunities first by understanding the nature and character of the programmes adopted by the school guided by the board, and secondly by exploring how the school is implementing the programmes.

I explored these challenges and opportunities through immersion in the practices and programmes of the school. I also sought further to understand the school culture and their multicultural priorities and educational programmes, through interviews with the principal, classroom teachers, school council (made up of parents, teachers and students), social justice committee, and programme and curriculum planners and those at the board who are responsible for developing the policies, programmes and curricula on equity and inclusivity and safe schools. I interviewed a representative number of teachers (50) from the school in order to generate further data for analysis from observation and seek more explanation. I adopted what Burkhardt and Schoenfeld (2003) call an engineering approach to educational research, in that “efforts are devoted to ‘understanding how the world works and helping it ‘to work better’ by designating and systematically developing high-quality solutions to practical problems” (Quoted in Frabutt, Holter, and Nuzzi, 2008:7).

Because the question of equity and diversity is the central concern of education in Ontario, the use of a qualitative ethnographic approach, focusing on a school within a board helped me to understand the essential issues and concerns of multicultural faith-based education today in Ontario. It also helped me to explore the issues of human rights and social justice. This method at the same time achieved what Creswell proposes of all qualitative research in education, that is, that individuals “seek understanding of the world in which they live and work” and “develop subjective meanings of their experiences” (Quoted in Koshy, 2010:80). The ethnographic design was chosen so that I could rely on the participants’ perspectives of the central phenomenon being studied—diversity and multicultural education—in order to understand the Community of the Beloved’s inclusive the school culture. This helped me to generate living knowledge, which led to the formulation of proposals for improvement and changes in school culture in faith-based Catholic education, which is the concern of my thesis: A more integrated faith-based approach to multicultural education in Catholic

schools, which sees the school culture as a dynamic value, and which all stakeholders share in developing, upholding and protecting.

1.2 The Catholic District School Board

Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is considered the most diverse city in Canada. According to the 2011 Census/National Household Survey released in 2013 (Census Canada, 2013), the population of Toronto in 2011 was 2,615,060, an increase of 4.5% since 2006. Some of the key points of the Census include: “ (i) Toronto remains a diverse city with higher shares of immigrants than the rest of the Greater Toronto Area, Hamilton and Canada overall; (ii) one-third of immigrants in Toronto are newcomers, having arrived in Canada in the last 10 years; (iii) the most common countries of birth of immigrants living in Toronto are China and the Philippines; (iv) residents of Toronto identified over 230 different ethnic origins in the 2013 National Household Survey; (v) 49% of those living in Toronto were immigrants, and of this number, 33% of immigrants living in Toronto arrived between 2001 and 2011.” The census figures also show that 49% of people living in Toronto today identify themselves as visible minorities and people of color, in a population of 1,264,395. When it comes to religion the census reports that 76% of those living in Toronto identified themselves with a particular religious affiliation, of which 54% identified themselves as Christian, and of those who identify themselves as Christians, 52% identified themselves as Catholics; 8% of those living in Toronto identified themselves as Muslim and 6% as Hindu. 24% had no religious affiliation. What this census shows is that Toronto offers one a good locus for examining any aspect of Canadian multiculturalism, especially with regard to education for diversity (Census Canada, 2013).

The many challenges and opportunities facing the separate school system in Ontario in implementing the Ontario Ministry of Education equity and inclusivity strategy can be understood through a qualitative ethnographical study using the largest Catholic school system in the province. The Catholic District School Board provides a mirror into understanding the complex nature of Catholic education in the province and in Canada as

well. It also provides a portrait of the highs and lows in the evolution of what has come to be a healthy and sometimes tense relation between the Ministry of Education and Catholic schools and bishops with regard to the challenges and opportunities of the equity and inclusivity strategies in Ontario.

The history of Catholic schools in Ontario reflects the political, cultural and religious shifts in the understanding and interpretation of the implications and applications of diversity and equity within the context of a multicultural Canada. The Catholic District School Board, which identifies itself in her mission statement as being “proud to be a significant part of the fabric of publicly-funded Catholic education in the Province of Ontario, serves more than 93,000 students in 200 Catholic schools, and represents close to 475,000 Catholic school supporters in Toronto” (CDSB, Mission Statement). According to Dixon (2007: 1), “the history of the separate school boards in Toronto is one of hardship, sacrifice, dedication, perseverance, faith, and hope. The trustees and Catholic community constantly faced decade after decade of obstacles to the health and even survival of their separate schools.”

Brown (1993: 275), in his account of the history of the Catholic school, notes that what is today the largest Catholic school system in Canada by early 1950 was available only to a very limited student body. According to Brown, in 1953, when the federated Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto was created, the Toronto and Suburban School Board (TSSB) which had responsibility for publicly-funded Catholic education in the area, was transformed by a special act of the provincial legislature into the Metropolitan Separate School Board (MSSB). Despite the lack of funds from the government and the apparent inability of the TSSB to contribute very much in the areas of educational research, program design, innovation and curriculum development, Brown notes that Catholic education in Canada’s biggest city by 1978 grew not only because of population growth of Catholics migrants in Toronto but also in terms of birth rate and the service factor (Brown, 1993: 284-286).

The granting of the same rights and privileges of full funding to Catholic primary and elementary schools by the Davis government in 1984, similar to the rights and privileges

granted to non-denominational schools, and “the reduction of school boards across the province and suspension of the right of school boards to raise taxes placed educational funding exclusively in the hands of the province for the first time. In addition, the institution of school councils in 1995 helped to bring parents and teachers into the local management of their community schools” (McGowan, 1998: 8). However, there is still a strong argument today in the province on whether the separate schools should exist at all, and on their place in a truly multicultural Canada. Proponents for the retention of the Catholic separate school system see it as a right. Indeed, they argue that the rights of separate schools to full funding from Ontario’s government granted to Catholics in 1984 was and still continues to be seen as the full implication of section 93 of the 1867 British North American Act. This significant piece of legislation indicates that ‘all the educational rights held by religious minorities at the time of confederation are to be secured constitutionally thereafter.’ However, opponents of the separate educational system in Ontario are questioning whether the rationale for that law still exists close to 150 years after its enactment (ICE, 2007: 3).

One of the implications of the educational act amendment of 1985 and 1986 granting funding to the Catholic schools was that the Ontario Ministry of Education will set the strategies and policies for education both for the public and separate schools, while the separate schools will adopt a distinctive Catholic approach to education (Matthews, 1990:33). The 2007 elections in Ontario when one major party ran on the promise of granting full funding to other faith-based schools raised the prospects of a single educational system in Ontario as is common in other provinces like Quebec, Newfoundland etc. While that proposal was not accepted by the electorate, it brought to the public domain the challenging question of the possibility of diversity and equity educational practices in Catholic schools, especially in those areas which have become central in the educational priorities and practices of public schools in the province (the rights of minorities). What is undeniable as Flynn (2003) argues is that there is increasing “demand for accountability, from not only the Catholic community” but also from the wider public in Ontario, from the separate school boards with regard to multicultural education. In the words of Flynn (2003:33), “underlying these changes were increasing demands from the government, some

sections of the media, and some parents for greater accountability in both teacher performance and student achievement.”

Many public school boards have been very proactive in responding to changes in the society, especially with the questions and challenges of diversity and equity. In 2008, the Toronto District School Board, in response to the challenges of racism and stereotyping of people of African descent in the public schools, started the first Afrocentric alternative school. The goal of the public school board was to address seriously the falling rate of educational retention, the high dropout rate and low performance among black students and especially those of Caribbean descent in the city’s schools. Many commentators argued that this new approach is a new form of sequestration and segregation which is very regressive and capable of undermining multicultural education. Some others looked beyond the fear of fragmentation of the entire educational system and proposed that this educational reform is being proposed to address some challenges facing minorities within the mainstream educational system. The separate school system in Ontario has not come up with any similar or related policy or program. The lack of a well-articulated program on diversity and multicultural education in Ontario’s separate school system is a serious challenge to the integral education of students in the schools run by the separate school boards. This offers the background for this research. However, it is important to frame the problem of this research through a theoretical framework which could help to get a better evidence-based understanding of the nature of the problem, and develop the right kind of methodology which will generate the adequate data for analysis and judgment.

According to the Catholic school’s Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education (CEIE) Policy H. M. 24 (2011);

As a Catholic school system, the Board and its staff are committed to the elimination of discrimination as outlined in Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and the Ontario Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 19 (2009); in a manner which is consistent with the exercise of the Board’s denominational rights under section 93 of the Constitutional Act, 1867; and as recognised in section 19 of Ontario Human Rights Code. Where there

is an apparent conflict between denominational rights and other rights the board will favour the protection of the denominational rights.

How to maintain fidelity to the requirements of Ontario's Ministry of Education with regard to the equity and inclusive strategy, and at the same time remain faithful to Catholic social ethics on a distinctive educational approach which is normative in nature and content, becomes a big challenge for the Catholic schools. This is because, as McDonough, Memon and Mintz have argued (2013: 1-20, 199-213), there is a changed Canadian cultural and religious context, and the idea of a monolithic Catholic Canadian community is passé. The central concern then is how Catholic educators interpret denominational rights vis-à-vis what the Ministry of Education proposes for equity and diversity. This problem is compounded by the fact that there is no consensus among the Catholic community as to what diversity and inclusivity allows or does not allow in the light of those rights provided for minorities like LGBTQ in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and which are rejected by the Catholic Church. Multiculturalism, as Demwing and Leman (2006) write, "represents a relatively coherent set of ideas or ideals that pertain to the celebration of Canada's diversity" (Dewing & Leman, 2006: 93-6E) but there are no generally accepted sets of practices at the school or community level in Canada which are definitive for living multiculturalism in Canada. The Ontario's Multicultural Educational Policy Document (2009) recognises that the Education Act No E.2 of 1990 affirms the constitutional rights of Catholics and French-language rights holders in Ontario. It also respects Aboriginal and treaty rights recognised by the Constitution Act of 1982.

The fundamental problem is that multiculturalism and diversity are fairly broad sets of values, programmes and projects in Canada both politically and with specific reference to education and schooling. The separate educational system in Ontario is trying to discover new ways of meeting the challenges of multicultural education, drawing from the rich social teaching resources of the Christian tradition with regard to the option for the poor, and from recent studies and innovations in critical theories of cultures, pedagogy and educational policies and programmes in pluralistic societies. Such new approaches are

expected to be broad enough to integrate differing interpretations of diversity and multiculturalism in Canada, and specific enough to model pathways for meeting the needs of students and the goals and priorities of schooling within a specific faith-based setting. This is a fundamental challenge, because there is a strong tension about the way equity, inclusivity and diversity are theorised and applied in both the educational theories used by the Ministry of Education and Catholic education boards within the changing context and content of Catholic social teaching. In order to meet the requirements of transparency and accountability in programs and practices of inclusion in the faith-based schools, there is the need to identify educational theories which inform the equity and diversity strategy and programmes of the separate school board as well as various models which are being followed in the Catholic schools. These considerations are decisive in setting the research agenda, research goals and research questions, as well as the research method.

1.3 Statement of the problem

In identifying the problem for this research, I paid special attention to the nature and framework of the research with regard to the data which are being sought, how to source the data through field study, and the overall objectives of the research and analysis. Three broad pathways have been proposed by Newby (2010: 10-12) in identifying and specifying the nature of the problem in doing educational research: exploring a particular issue or sets of issues within the educational system and the wider community; collecting information in order to make judgement and interpretation of educational policies; and improving practice. Newby also draws a clear distinction between a research issue and a research problem (Newby, 2009: 77). A research issue according to Newby is the theme from the research agenda. It is usually a topic or area where there is potential for educational research and usually will benefit the educational community if one undertook a fruitful research on those issues.

In the context of this research, the issue hovered around diversity and equity education in faith-based publicly-funded schooling in Ontario. There is strong tension which plays out in

the schools and Catholic school boards, in churches and in the parliaments about what diversity and inclusive education means and how to implement it. Many people are seeking for solutions which could be acceptable to both the conservative and progressive camps in Catholic education and in the political arena. The problem for this research was then how to account for this divisive tendencies in the Catholic schools and how to identify the challenges and opportunities which separate schools face in implementing the Ontario equity and diversity education strategy set out by the Ministry of Education within a faith-based setting.

1.4 Research question

The research question pursued in this dissertation is stated as follows:

What are the challenges and opportunities posed by diversity and multiculturalism to the faith-based education in high schools in an Ontario Separate School Board?

This research question translates into the following specific sub-questions:

- Are the challenges posed by diversity and multiculturalism to the faith-based education in high schools in an Ontario Separate School Board the result of the secular-sacred conflict between the requirements of the Ministry of Education and Catholic social teaching on equity and diversity?
- What are the opportunities for improving school culture which can be explored through a healthy adaptation of the complementary educational traditions of diversity and multiculturalism on equity and diversity from both the Ministry of Education and Catholic social teaching?
- What possible reforms which could be identified in school contexts through the practitioner perspectives in order to better meet these challenges in the light of the changing demographics of the student population in the schools?

1.5 Research aim

This research aimed to identify the challenges and opportunities which Catholic schools encounter in implementing a faith-based equity and multicultural education consistent with both Catholic social teaching and the equity and inclusivity strategy of the Ministry of Education. The goal of this research was to show that these two approaches can complement each other. Both should not be seen as two dialectically-opposed worldviews. This unresolved predicament has created a lot of tension in the schools and is negatively affecting school culture, students' success and teacher satisfaction in the work place. In light of these, the objectives of this research were:

- To identify the tension and challenges in the implementation of the Ministry of Education's equity and inclusivity strategy in a Catholic separate school board, the Toronto Catholic District School Board.
- To describe how a Catholic high school in the Catholic school system is seizing the opportunities of diversity and equity education strategy of both the Catholic school board's strategy for diversity and multicultural education and the Ministry of Education's strategy in creating a healthy school culture which is enhancing students' success.
- To propose some pathways for reform of the faith-based diversity and multicultural education in Catholic schools which will help bring about a healthy and inclusive school culture for minorities and enhance students' success.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study is significant in a number of ways. This is the first study of its kind which critically and creatively examined how the conflict between the EIE of the government and the CEIE of the church-based strategies for diversity and multicultural education in Ontario's separate schools is affecting the quality of inclusive education in the Catholic schools. The focus of the study (minority students with homosexual orientation and black students) was one of those forgotten areas in most faith-based schools, not only in Ontario but in the rest of Canada. Faith-based schools are often accused of creating a notion of

human dignity and equality in very generic and metaphysical terms. In some cases, homosexual orientation is either spiritualised or interpreted as a sinful condition from which people need to be converted. While the goal of this study was not to examine the rationality of such a stance, the researcher sought to show that the increasing number of students with homosexual orientation in separate schools, and the high rate of suicide of teenagers who are struggling with their sexual identity, require developing a more inclusive school culture. The research hopes that in identifying different pathways to an inclusive culture from the results of field study, the school board can adopt these in helping the struggling students to feel accepted and supported in the school. The same is true of the condition of black students in separate schools. The public schools in Ontario have started a conscious attempt to address the prevalence of racism and prejudice against Black students in Ontario, with the establishment of black-only schools in the Greater Toronto Area in 2008, among other efforts. In pointing out the limitations of educational programs and proposing new pathways for reform with regard to creating an inclusive school culture for black students in the separate school system, I hope to help in charting a new course which will bring about a more integrated learning and pedagogy in Ontario's separate schools which meets the requirements of justice and equity.

1.7 Definition of key concepts

Diversity and equity education, as well as multicultural education, are often viewed together in most educational policy documents, with diversity representing more emphasis on equity and inclusivity of persons and groups, the historical 'other' or 'outsider', and multiculturalism representing the acceptance of cultures and subjects who incarnate those cultures. According to James A. Banks based on recent research multicultural education can be viewed in the following three ways: "(i) to reform the schools and other educational institutions so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups will experience educational equality; (ii) to give male and female students an equal chance to experience educational success and mobility; (iii) an education which helps to promote the interaction of race, class, and gender in a healthy and open manner Banks" (Banks, 2004:

xi).”He argues further that. “this kind of approach will have multiple dimensions, namely institutional changes being made in: the curriculum; the teaching materials; teaching and learning styles; the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of teachers and administrators; and the goals, norms and culture of the school” (Banks, 2004: xi). Banks’ definition is adopted in this research, and for him diversity and equity education is: “a field of study and an emerging discipline whose major aim is to create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class, and cultural groups. One of its important goals is to help all students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function effectively in a pluralistic democratic society and to interact, negotiate, and communicate with people from diverse groups to create a civic and moral community that works for the common good.” (Banks, 2004: IX).

Viewed in this broad sense, multicultural education could be seen as an education for equity and inclusion and an education for justice, since it aims at addressing the inadequacies within the educational system which hamper the integral development of each and every student. This is particularly so because the traditional Western educational system, which is the template on which schooling is based in North America, was built on an epistemology which idealizes mainstream content of knowledge, while failing to take into consideration the different ways of knowing, the different levels of the cultural and existential situations of the learners, and their social location. In addition, until recently, schooling, teaching and learning in North America did not have sufficient flexibility to attend to the specific educational needs of minorities and those on the margins: people of color, immigrants, gays and lesbians, and in some cases many people who are excluded from flourishing because of their social class, gender, religion or because of disability (exceptionality). Diversity and equity education is understood in this dissertation as an approach to a more integrated and context-sensitive education, which promotes social mobility for every student and the most constitutionally and pedagogically valid path towards social transformation and personal empowerment, and the creation of a more just and equitable society.

Another definition which looks at multicultural education in terms of how schools are

contributing to civic culture and the preservation, promotion and protection of the common good is one given by the United States National Council for the Social Sciences (NCSS). According to its document, *Curriculum Guideline for Multicultural Education*; “Multicultural education helps students understand and affirm their community cultures and helps to free them from cultural boundaries, allowing them to create and maintain a civic community that works for the common good. Multicultural education seeks to actualize the idea of *pluribus unum* within our nation and to create a society that recognises and respects the cultures of its diverse people, people united within a framework of overarching democratic values. A unified and cohesive democratic society can be created only when the rights of its diverse people are reflected in its institutions, within its national culture, and within its schools, colleges, and universities. A national culture or school curriculum that does not reflect the voices, struggles, hopes, and dreams of its many peoples is neither democratic nor cohesive. Divisiveness within a nation-state occurs when important segments within its society are structurally excluded and marginalized” (NCSS, 1991: 1).

A third definition which applies to this thesis is the one given by Benedicta Egbo (2009). According to her: “By far the most common educational response to immigration and diversity in Canada has been the adoption of empowering approaches to schooling. One of these approaches is multicultural education, which is premised on the rationale that school systems are morally bound to reflect the multicultural character of Canada, in order to equalize educational and social opportunities of all. In addition, it is also grounded in the principles of fundamental rights and social justice, which reject monocultural and assimilationist educational ideologies in pluralistic societies such as Canada” (Egbo, 2009: 59).

Separate Education as used in this dissertation refers to the classical definition given to Catholic faith-based schools (early childhood, primary, and secondary schools) in Canada since May 6, 1863. It was on this date that the Separate School Act was passed into law ‘to restore to Roman Catholics in Upper Canada (as the province of Ontario was then called), the rights in respect to Separate Schools (Separate Schools Act, S.U.C., 1863, 26 Vict., c. 5). It was a law which was aimed to protect the rights of the minority Catholics to Catholic

education in the then predominantly Protestant public school system.

1.8 Organisation of the thesis

This work is divided into six chapters, with a general introduction and concluding chapter which summarizes the main findings of the research and proposes recommendations for the reform of Catholic faith-based education in Ontario.

Chapter One outlined the historical context of the study, while outlining the trajectory of the tension between Catholic schooling and public schooling in Ontario, and the ideological and doctrinal issues which impact the effectiveness of the equity and inclusivity strategy of the Catholic board. I will further examine the history, structure and character of the separate school system in Ontario and discuss my research methodology and design instruments.

Chapter Two discussed the literature review which explored the theoretical framework of this thesis, as well as the themes of the thesis, which include the meaning and dimensions of multicultural education in general and the specific nature of diversity and multicultural education within a faith-based context. The aspects of focus were the construction of knowledge, the challenges of the hidden curriculum, the pervasive presence of prejudice and the challenges of social reproduction. In doing this, I showed some of the sociological theories and concepts of education, especially in formal educational settings, which helped to shed light on the challenges of diversity and equity as a question of social equity. The chapter examined such important and related concepts as cultural modeling, cultural habitus, cultural power and cultural capital with regard to the dominant culture and mainstream epistemologies which shape the construction of knowledge and how these are presented in the literature. The chapter also showed how these reinforce the inequitable socio-economic opportunities against minorities in Ontario. The chapter also analysed documents and resources on diversity and multicultural education in Ontario's schools. I comparatively studied the generic policies of the Ministry of Education of Ontario and the strategies on equity and diversity in the separate school system. I examined specific board and school policies. This chapter further examined the challenges and opportunities in

embracing diversity and multicultural education in the separate school system in Ontario as presented in previous research in this area.

Chapter Three discussed the research method and the research design of the thesis. I discussed the various research instruments which I used in this qualitative study, and how used them to implement an ethnographic case study of the Catholic School Board's development of an equity and diversity faith-based education strategy for students' success in the high schools.

Chapter Four was devoted to the analysis of the data. It was the major contribution of this research to diversity and equity education in the separate school system. In this chapter I presented the findings on how the teachers at Community of the Beloved Catholic High School are implementing the Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education (CEIE) strategy. This chapter was based on my ethnographic field report, interviews with teachers, parents and students and my participation in various social justice programs of the school, school masses, and other activities for creating an inclusive school culture. The chapter also did a documentary review of the resources which the teachers are using as resources and tools for realizing the goals of the CEIE and the specific school strategies and practices of inclusion.

Chapter Five examined the challenges and opportunities of diversity and multicultural education in Ontario Catholic schools as presented in the narratives of teachers at Community of the Beloved and at the Catholic board. It thematised the challenges, and examined the nature of these challenges as well as how they affect the realization of the CEIE. The opportunities offered for the transformation of Catholic education as a result of the changing demographics of the student population in the Ontario Catholic schools were also presented. This was achieved through the analysis of data from interviews with teachers, school administrators, the school chaplain, special education experts and consultants, parents, the students' council and social justice committee members.

Chapter Six built on my research findings and ethnographic data, and drew from my rich experience as a teacher and my creative application of insights from literature reviews, in recommending some steps towards embracing diversity and equity education in Ontario's separate school system. I showed how to build a more inclusive school culture through formation of teachers, and how teachers and school administrators can develop the cultural competence and cultural proficiency required for transforming the school culture. This, I recommended will support the formation of well-adjusted students, who are sufficiently equipped with the skills needed to flourish in a culturally pluralistic society. I offered some proposals for the reform of Catholic education in Ontario in the light of the challenges and problems identified in the research. The proposals for reform were also enriched through suggestions and stories which I collected from the experiences of teachers, students and educational communities at Community of the Beloved school, as well as parents, educational administrators and stakeholders in the Catholic school system. I also identified new pathways and trajectories for research in this neglected area of Catholic education as we move into the future

Chapter Two

The challenges and opportunities of Diversity and multicultural education

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by showing the theoretical framework of this thesis. It then proceeds with a literature review by addressing three important aspects of this study: (i) an analysis of the current research on faith-based schooling within the context of Catholic education (through separate school boards in Ontario) whose educational policy with regard to diversity and multiculturalism is studied in this study; (ii) a review of current research on diversity and multicultural education in Canadian education within the compass of global discussion on equity and diversity; and (iii) a survey of the policies of Ontario Separate school on diversity and multicultural education in relation to the Ontario Ministry of Education policies which inform the faith-based policies. The goal of this review was to locate this research within the trajectory of ongoing conversation on equity and diversity in Catholic schools focusing specifically on black students and students with homosexual orientation. Whereas there are other minority groups in high schools in Ontario whose socialisation through the educational process in faith-based setting may manifest similar degrees of complexities in terms of marginalisation or discrimination, the focus of this review was to isolate two particular groups whose issues and concerns have led to changes in policies at the government levels as well as at board and school levels in Ontario since 2008.

2.2 Theoretical framework of thesis

According to Larabee (2009: 3) the theoretical framework “is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists....It is used to limit the scope of the relevant data by focusing on specific variables and defining the specific viewpoint (framework) that researcher takes in analysing and interpreting the data which were gathered. It also facilitated the understanding of concepts and variables according to given definitions and builds new knowledge by validating or challenging theoretical assumptions.” Grant and Osanloo (2014: 12) propose that a theoretical framework offers “the foundation from which all knowledge is constructed (metaphorically and literally) for a research”; it serves as “the structure and support for the rationale of the study” and “provides a grounding base for the literature review, and most importantly, the methods and analysis”.

The challenges and opportunities of diversity and multiculturalism to Catholic education are not specific to Canada. This is because the question about religious education in Catholic schools is a perennial challenge in multiple contexts of Catholic education. It is also central to understanding why the Catholic Church continues to be a pioneer in education and how the church can continue in this role as it crosses different cultural and spiritual frontiers. The mission of Catholic education in Canada, however, is changing in the face of social change and cultural pluralism in a multicultural Canada. This is why any research on Catholic education in Canada today must evolve through an adequate theoretical framework. Such a theoretical framework enabled me not only to describe the central phenomenon under consideration, but also to burrow into different regnant theories in this field which can help generate generalisable data helpful in answering the questions as to how and why the central phenomenon manifests itself in a particular way in specific context of education and school culture. It helped to advance the practice in the area

with regard to reform within the system.

According to Egbo (2009), there are many theoretical frameworks in researching on equity and diversity in all educational settings. These also apply to faith based setting, particularly in Ontario where faith-based Catholic schooling is publicly funded. These frameworks include two types of theories. The first is the group of *consensus theories* which “see society as organized systems and structures in which equilibrium, stability, order, and social cohesion are its prominent features while agreement is the most preeminent social force” (Egbo, 2009: 12). Consensus theorists, whether conservatives or progressives, see schools as sites for empowerment for all students in equal measure irrespective of gender, social background, cultural condition, cultural habitus etc. Consensus theorists see schools as merit-based social agency for social mobility which is open to all. They disagree with the theorists who argue that schools are sites for class war or unequal power relations between dominant cultures and minority groups which are structured to preserve white privilege while sometimes strengthening the structures of domination, social reproduction and inter- generational poverty. Researchers who operate from this perspective are more concerned with identifying the structures and systems which lead to common curriculum, common core, and a monocultural and generic school curriculum and a putative monolithic school culture.

The second is the *interrogative theory* which was developed by David Corson (1998) in his book, *Changing Education for Diversity*. Researchers who approach sociology of education from this framework work with the assumption that there is “an inherent connection between education, social positioning, and power in society” (Egbo, 2009: 13). According to this framework, schools are not value-neutral, rather they are sites for cultural and ideological wars which may be latent or hidden. This war is reflected in the attempt to subtly impose a northern epistemic framework in building a school culture or educational policy without regard to the diversity of students. This theory argues further that there is a philosophy and worldview which govern every

educational system. These values are carried and reinforced through cultural knowledge, cultural artifacts, cultural systems and symbols of the dominant culture in schools. Socio-educational researchers who inhabit this camp proceed in their research by understanding how what Egbo calls 'the intersections of class, power, and privilege' is so critical in shaping the school's mission, mandate, policies, and programmes and is also determinative in how they are designed, implemented and evaluated.

This is quite relevant in any research in Catholic schools. This is because the Catholic school systems claim that Catholic education has a distinctive character and a Christian anthropology which upholds the dignity and equality of every person in the eyes of God. As a result, the identity and mission of her schools emerge from Catholicism's claims about the human person, God, and the goal of human life on earth which tend to be normative in its interpretation of the human person's vocation, social location, and the meaning and goal of education. D'Souza (2003: 372-377) argues for instance that this distinctiveness of Catholic education is grounded on its theological anthropology and Catholic philosophy of education. What this means is that Catholic education operates from a classist notion of common culture and common end which views the school as sites for evangelization based on a shared worldview and a shared faith. D'Souza (2016: 183) sees this goal of common culture and the need to overcome a polarizing cultural plurality as decisive because:

by recognizing the dignity of each individual student, the Catholic school plays its part in moving beyond religious and cultural differences to all that binds a diverse student body as human persons marked by personal dignity and united by their common humanity, who contribute to society and are bound upon a common human journey.

The theoretical framework adopted in this study is the interrogative-hermeneutical perspective with its dual approaches to research, namely the conflict and critical theoretical framework. This approach helped the research to understand the nature

of the secular-sacred conflict in the Catholic schools, and the different horizons of ideological and institutional differences among practitioners at the level of competing value preferences. This approach is represented in the pioneering work by Canadian educational theorist, Egbo (2009) in, *Teaching for Diversity in Canadian Schools*. Egbo (2009) proposes a critical, and historical theoretical framework for understanding and exploring the nature of diversity within Canadian society, the shifting demographics in Canadian elementary and secondary schools, and the necessary components which should be integrated in formulating educational strategies and practices for inclusion and equity in schools. She identifies herself with the conflict and critical theories for understanding and interpreting school culture.

Egbo (2009:13) argues that the conflict theories:

question the assumed neutral and value-free views of schools and expose how they serve the interests of the dominant group. They further argue that as institutions of socialization, schools reproduce the values, ideologies, and worldviews of the dominant group, and in so doing, reinforce existing economic, political and social inequities resulting in social reproduction.

She identifies two paradigms which reinforce the system of domination of minorities through mainstreaming of school culture, namely economic reproduction and cultural reproduction. Economic reproduction is based on the correspondence principle which holds that:

there is a relationship between the unequal treatment less privileged students receive in schools and the hierarchical structure of the labor force...In Canada, minority students predominate in 'compensatory' and special needs programs. Just as they constitute the majority in special needs programs, ethnic minority students are more likely to take course that are less academically challenging than their White peers (Egbo, 2009: 14).

This framework has also been proposed for socio-education by Ghosh and Galczynski (2014) in, *Redefining Multicultural Education: Inclusion and Right to be Different*. While not distinguishing the specific elements in the school culture between conflict and critical theories, they point to the importance of ethnographic research in showing how being different from the dominant cultural experience could produce what they call “a ‘chilly effect’ in school” (Ghosh & Galczynski, 2014: 99). Critical theoretical constructs, when applied in socio-educational studies of school culture, reveal interesting realities about Canadian schools according to Ghosh and Galczynski (Ghosh & Galczynski, 2014: 98-99), namely (i) that hostile climate results when students are excluded from the content and method of learning, and from school culture when what they experience in school is removed from their cultural experience, (ii) the subjective experiences of students are determined by the objective organization of schools; (iii) the school is not value-neutral rather it is a site of shared experiences whose meanings are created by people especially the dominant cultures, (iv) a multicultural education is thus the best form of education for creating an inclusive school culture because in both content and structure it brings about students’ success through the creation of school environment which weaves different levels of relationships which are the basis for success or failure.

This conflictual framework for interpreting and changing the school culture is reinforced through critical cultural theoretical framework. According to Egbo (Egbo, 2009: 16):

critical theorists propose an alternative view of society that offers possibilities for changing its social institutions such as schools. With a focus on two issues (how schools help dominant groups maintain power and control, and how challenge and interrogation can interrupt the dominance) critical theory offers directions for change...Critical theory offers a framework that is germane to any discussion of diversity in schools. It sees the curriculum not only as a complex medium that perpetuates domination, but also as one that holds emancipator possibilities.

She particularly draws from recent research on the effects of the hidden curriculum,

the pervasive danger of cultural modeling and how to address the challenges of social reproduction and social inequity which are prevalent in Canadian schools and the wider Canadian society. These continue to affect minorities (people of color, the Aboriginals and First Nations and students with homosexual orientation). Her call for structural reforms and policy changes which require a more progressive and ongoing formation for teachers in the public schools offers some helpful tools for articulating a new form of educational leadership training needed for Ontario teachers so that they can meet the challenges of diversity and multicultural education.

Even though she addresses public schools' culture and the unjust educational practices in Canada, her analysis offers us some useful categories for critical study in faith-based education. This is because the social-demographics and teaching environment of the public school is the same as that of the separate faith-based Catholic schools particularly in Ontario. Indeed, both systems employ the same educational paradigm with regard to the curriculum; they follow the same training and certification for teachers, and operate broadly at the same level of cultural and institutional educational context. The only difference is that separate schools admit a faith-based orientation to education, whereas the public schools do not admit any specific religious standpoint in content or orientation. However, both systems of schooling in Ontario face the same question: What shall we teach and how shall we relate to our students especially in the context of students' diversity in such a way that their daily experiences are reflected in their school experience?

The critical and conflict theoretical framework reject the conservative-traditional approach regnant in Catholic education which is resistant to social change and social experimentation of any kind in the Catholic schools. It rejects a classist synchronic notion of culture and a normative reading of history, human nature and human societies. This critical cultural theory movement is also present in current research in Catholic education especially outside Canada. Sullivan (2012) points to the need for

Catholic education to embrace a process of transition which is similar to what happens with sacred texts when they are read by a different audience. Sullivan (2012: 205) argues as follow:

In each culture one comes across both opportunities and constraints in the task of conveying a tradition. Catholic educators need discernment in identifying the ways in which a culture presents both obstacles and aids to their task. There can be no interpretation of the faith which is entirely culture-free.

The need for translation in Catholic education highlights also the need for transitions and changes within the system dictated by empirical evidence. Holter and Frabutt (2011: 1) raise a question which faces every researcher on Catholic education, “How will you respond to the challenges that face you as educators and leaders in Catholic schools? How do you ensure that you are developing policies and enacting pedagogies that create positive educational opportunities for your students?”. The answer to this question demands an empirical research into how the school culture is being shaped by Catholic educational philosophy and how adequate or inadequate this educational philosophy is for meeting the changes and challenges as well as the opportunities of Canadian pluralistic society.

The need for evolution in Catholic education to meet the challenges and changes of modern world has been demonstrated especially by Grace (2003), who is the founding editor of the *International Studies in Catholic Education*. Grace (2003) proposed that the gulf between those who criticise Catholic schools as being out of touch with cultural and modern society, and the defenders of Catholic education as the last bastion for protecting Catholic ideals in the young can only be bridged through an evidence-based research. He proposes that all research in Catholic educational setting should adopt ethnographic and empirical research rather than purely abstract reasoning because “a comprehensive construct of educational inquiry must include engagement with specific faith cultures in given educational situations” (Grace, 2003: 150). He goes on to propose why evidence-based research is solely

needed in determining how school cultures are being shaped in the Catholic schooling system and their implications for the continued existence of Catholic education in its present forms in different contexts and countries. Firstly, is that such evidence-based research might challenge the church and Christians on some of the assumptions and models which they have adopted in the educational practice for a very long time. Secondly, such evidence-based research may topple some of the 'current political and public debate about faith-based schooling' which are based on prejudice about faith or Catholic education and generalised assertion and counter-assertion which have been built over time without any research or empirical evidence for such conclusions. Thirdly, is that such research might offer theoretical frameworks and research paradigms to enrich Catholic education in multiple settings (Grace, 2003: 150-151). Grace (2003: 159-160) concludes by proposing as follows:

With the growing importance of faith-based schooling systems internationally there is an obvious need for more systematic research and inquiry into their spiritual, moral, and intellectual cultures and into their educational and social outcomes. Such research will need to be impartial, comprehensive and sensitive to the pluralistic range of faith traditions and communities.

What is emerging in contemporary research on Catholic education (Grace, 2009; Pollefeyt & Bouwens, 2010) is a movement away from an apologetic and metaphysical interpretation and appropriation of Catholic education in the school culture to what Grace refers to a more 'roots with openness' approach. That is, there is now a shift from classical defence of a distinctive Catholic educational ideal to a more experiential evidence-based research and a greater openness to diversity and cultural pluralism in developing an inclusive Catholic school culture. Among the ten emerging trends identified by Grace and O'Keefe (2007) in their study of the challenges facing Catholic education in over 30 societies in the world, three seem very germane to the assumption of the theoretical framework of this research.

Firstly is the impact of secularisation upon the work of Catholic education. The world

is changing and Catholic schools are being challenged to change but also to hold in balance the tension between innovation and tradition. Secondly, moral and social formation of students, teachers, administrators and pastors and indeed all stakeholders in the Catholic education system is seriously affected by changing cultural situations. This means that the answers provided in the past to formation and socialisation into a pristine Catholic culture through the schools or even an ahistorical presentation and defence of Catholic faith which sees the schools as sites for evangelism is problematic. Thirdly, contemporary students' attitudes towards, and experiences of, Catholic schooling are no longer homogenous (Grace, 2009: 7).

The theoretical framework of both critical and conflict based theories of school culture has been developed further when applied to education within a faith-based setting by Dutch scholars, Bakker and Avest (2009) using the writings of De Wolff. Their theorisation of the school's construction of identity as characterised by dialectics of meaning offers this thesis a theoretical framework for how a faith-based interrogative theoretical framework can lead a researcher into understanding, interpreting, analysing, and evaluating how a faith-based school culture is shaped by the daily practices within the school. It also offers a framework for moving beyond the conflicting worldviews and cultural systems which clash in the school and how it affects the minorities to a reimagining of the school environment as a place of encounter where differences are respected and seen not as deficit but potentially positive and integrative variables for creating a culture of inclusion in the school.

In agreement with the critical and conflictual theorists of school culture, Bakker and Avest (2009: 129) see school identity as those aspects of the school life which are "qualities of the school, shared by the members of the school community (and generally accepted as the standard by members of the community) and which is permanent and long-lasting to a certain extent." They propose an approach to schooling which moves from an absolute normative culture or what Baumann calls

‘dominant discourse’ in which people tend to reify views, cultures, religious backgrounds and school ethos to a ‘demotic discourse’ where people are open to new expressions of everyday language and modes of encounter which create and produce new culture and new school ethos (Bakker & Avest, 2009: 129). They argue that ‘encounter is the core of the school’s identity’ and they propose the structural identity consultation (SIC) as a framework for realizing the kind of encounter which transforms mono-cultural thinking, to inter-subjective encounters and transformative multicultural education in diverse faith-based schooling.

However, they emphasise the importance of finding out the ‘field of tension’—similar to the conflictual and critical theoretical approaches—in order to establish the horizon of differences in the school culture with regard to how the stakeholders think and act concerning the religious identity of their school vis-à-vis the cultural diversity of the school or the wider community. The goal is to demonstrate through qualitative empirical analysis that ‘the construction of the formal portrait’ of the experiences of teachers in the school could help to identify the sources of tension in the school culture and how such tension could be addressed (Bakker & Avest, 2009: 132-133). They argue that their research in faith-based schools in Holland revealed that the notion of the identity of the school as the basis of school culture was presented by the teachers as an abstract concept “which exists rather isolated from daily practices in school and is not really related to this practice” (Bakker and Avest, 2009: 133). When the teachers were invited to reflect on the identity of their schools they were rather deductive in their reasoning; but when they were invited to speak from their daily activities and practices in the school, they were more inductive in their reasoning. The dominant discourse—in school documents school guides, policies, mission statement etc—were shown to be more deductive, propositional, generalising and top-down in reasoning and justification of school culture, but the demotic discourse is more experientially based and conveyed through everyday experiences and storytelling. They, therefore propose that the reform of faith-based education in order to meet the challenges of social change and pluralistic societies is not the

abandonment of the claims of faith-based groups, but rather an openness to daily experiences of teachers and students through healthy inter-subjective and inter-cultural encounters (what Emmanuel Levinas calls 'the otherness of the other' 'relationship with the other which does not reduce the other to the same') which give birth to best practices. Best practices are not reified models but transformative models which emerge from the heart of the school community. They argue strongly about the evidence from their field study:

The examples of 'good practice' show the complexity of the concept of encounter. In various narratives it is states that moments of mutuality of the involvement make the meeting of two people to a real encounter. It seems that the other aspects of encounter, like noticing the other as different from you and in need of something, and being aware of your own qualities to be offered to the other, might be considered as preconditions or phases in the encounter culminating in a 'real encounter'; the 'real encounter' is the aim of the teacher (Bakker & Avest, 2009: 143).

Viewed in this light, there should be no normative Catholic school culture which is applicable to all contexts and in all times. Schools are the product of constant negotiation, openness to the other and a culture of encounter which opens new vistas for the evolution of a transformative culture for both learners, teachers, administrators and parents. In this kind of school, everyone is learning in the presence of others; every encounter in the classroom or hallway becomes a moment of transcendence and intimacy and the school culture is constantly growing and adapting to new realities.

This view of Catholic school is still emerging and faces challenges from forces of conservatism within the system and in institutional Catholicism still enslaved to an unchanging notion of Catholic faith, human nature and human culture. It is this theoretical assumption—which uses the conflictual and critical theories to identify the challenges in the system; and which uses the 'encounter paradigm' harvested

through evidence-based interaction with teachers and students in the frontlines of school culture which informs this thesis and specifies the pathway for proceeding with this research. This framework is adopted because negotiating these contending tensions offers opportunities for the emergence of a school culture which is the fruit of evidence-based research, dialogue among stakeholders, and multiple levels of encounters among all those involved in the educational process. It also helps the research to discover contextual approaches to creating school cultures which mirror the experience of every student in the school thus creating a culture of success for every student.

There are three important assumptions of this theoretical framework for this research, namely:

- Key concepts in the Equity and Inclusive Education (EIE) of Ontario Ministry of Education and Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education (CEIE) strategies, namely diversity, inclusive and multicultural education have been differently understood, interpreted and understood by teachers, administrators in Catholic education as well as parents and the wider community. This lack of clarity means that this research seeks to clarify how these concepts are understood in the strategy for inclusive school culture formulated by the school boards and the Ministry of education. It also shows why it is important to understand practitioners' perspectives in this area in order to develop practices that could help improve practice.
- There are significant contestations among stakeholders which should not be perceived negatively as being a dialectical tension. An evidence-based interrogative theoretical research through narrative ethnography concentrating on the perspectives of the stakeholders, could reveal significant aspects of this tension. This has the capacity of pointing to the birth pangs for a new reality and the pain of a twilight in a pattern and model of education within the Catholic schools which is outdated. Thus in the framework of religious education as encounter, conflicts of meaning are not necessarily to

be resolved through polarizing the parties, but rather through dialogue. The challenges of creating a school culture is seen more as an opportunity to seek potentially viable option from multiple perspectives of the stakeholders to finding how to create an inclusive culture. In this regard, this research adopted tools which helped me observe, describe and analyze how the stakeholders view the different approaches hence the adoption of a qualitative ethnographic approach which presented the portrait of the school culture through the lens of the teachers and administrators in the frontlines.

- This means that the methodology for investigation and the research instrument were framed in such a way to interpret the school culture through the stories from those who have firsthand experience of what is going on in the school. This was accomplished by being immersed in the school culture through an ethnographic narrative approach. According to Paul Ricoeur because, “the activity of narrating does not consist simply in adding episodes to one another; it also constructs meaningful totalities out of scattered events. This aspect of the art of narrating is reflected, on the side of *following a story*, in the attempt to ‘grasp together’ successive events. The art of narrating, as well as the corresponding art of *following a story*, therefore require that we are able to extract a configuration from a succession” (Ricoeur, 1991: 278). *Following a story* will involve a succession of activities and an immersion into the school culture, listening to the experience of the teachers, students and parents and bringing together different layers of meaning; to reflect as Ricoeur proposes on multiple events with the aim of ‘encompassing them in successive totalities’ (Ricoeur, 1991: 279). This involves digging into multiple layers which to borrow the words of Walter Benjamin, involves ‘a lot of digging beyond the surface’ which might involve going through multiple sources—community (context), the worldview and social facts (pre-text)—and returning to the same matter (the text/school culture), “to scatter it as one scatters earth, to turn it over as one turns over soil. For the ‘the matter itself’ is no more than the strata which yield their long- sought secrets only to the most meticulous investigation” (Benjamin,

2005:576).

These three assumptions of the theoretical framework are taken up in greater detail in the literature review which follows. Here I have showed that there are broadly speaking three approaches on research on equity and diversity in faith-based Catholic schools regnant in sociology of education. One is the approach defined and proposed by the official Catholic teaching authority (represented by the Pope and bishops in communion with him in specific countries and regions); the second is the diverse interpretations of this teaching by Catholic educators and theologians along two main lines—a more traditional thinking and a more progressive approach; and thirdly a more experiential approach to understanding the task of education and the goal of schooling by school boards and Catholic teachers and administrators of schools. These three main lines of interpretation and application reveal at this preliminary stage why it is important to understand the contestations and polarisation in the Catholic educational system with regard to theories and strategies for educational reform and practices of inclusion. They also shed light on how these often dialectically opposed approaches ramify or become more complex based on the forces of social change in Canadian society for instance and in the politicisation of educational policies and strategies in the public square. This is why understanding the complexities of the situation and the rationale given to support various positions is a necessary step in understanding both the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the thesis as well as appreciating the importance of such a research endeavour.

2.3. Catholic education and the challenges and opportunities of diversity and multicultural education

This section examines some of the materials on Catholic education with regard to diversity and multiculturalism. They also show that Catholic educational documents are normative and classical in their conception of culture and human person and do not sufficiently reflect cultural diversity. I rely mainly on the

official teaching of the Catholic Church through the documents from Rome and the appropriation of this teaching in the Canadian context through the documents and occasional instructions from both the Conference of Canadian Catholic Bishops (CCCCB), and the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops (OCCB).

The second section of this review deals with the writings of theologians, educationists and social scientists on the official teaching of the Church on Catholic education, and how its implementation in the separate school system in Ontario is creating challenges and opportunities for meeting the requirements of the secular state for diversity and multicultural education, especially for students of color and students with homosexual orientation. Some of the voices I engage include Mario D'Souza, Graham P. McDonough, Stephen J. McKinney, Gerald Grace, Terence McLaughlin, Dennis J. Murphy, Leonard A. Kennedy, J. Ken Donlevy and Joyce A. Crider, and documents issued by the Canadian Catholic School Trustees' Association, and the Institute of Catholic Education, among others. Through these scholarly voices on matters of education and Catholicism, one can appreciate and better understand the identity, mission and values of Catholic education as it responds to issues of secularism, diversity and inclusivity.

The first point to address in this review is that these authors argue that the specificity of Catholic education is reflected in the principles and foundational philosophical and theological principles which it offers in the development and implementation of policies of diversity and multiculturalism. Elias (2002:1) declares that the evolution of Christianity over the centuries was matched by the growth of theological or Christian education. These shifts deeply affected society and the Catholic Church, which would adapt and respond, in large part, by instituting the *Congregation for Catholic Education*. However, an examination of some of the Catholic educational documents will show that fundamental principles on which the

practitioners of Catholic education base their policies and programmes with regard to diversity and multiculturalism are common, but its interpretations and application are diversely defined in most cases by cultural and historical factors. According to McKinney (2011: 158):

The concept of Catholic schooling is constructed within a Catholic Christian belief system that positions God at the heart of its epistemology and ontology. The secular viewpoint believes in the goodness of humanity and strives for the flourishing and progress of humanity, but within an epistemological and ontological framework that is founded on humanity and rejects any possibility of a deity.

Understanding the vision/rationale, the nature of Catholic schooling, the place of the Catholic teacher and the approaches to diversity and multiculturalism in Catholic education will require understanding the official teaching of the Church on why the Catholic Church engages in the education of young people. The major declaration or the *magna carta* on Catholic education is the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis* (1965). Because of the significance of this document for understanding the historical and institutional context of Catholic education, and the evolution in understanding of the mission and distinctiveness of Catholic education, I will give an extensive summary of this document and a short summary of other documents which came after it. The Declaration begins with a preface and has 12 articles: on the meaning of education (articles 1-4), on schools in general (5-7), on the goal of Catholic schools (8-11), on faculties and universities and on cooperation with the Magisterium (12), and a conclusion.

2.3.1 The Meaning of education

In the Preface, the authors clearly state that "education is of paramount importance in the lives of people" as a way of helping them to play an active role in social progress. This is because when people become enlightened they appreciate more

their dignity and then play their own part in the political, economic and social life of society. It notes that consciousness of this fact of the importance of education has led to different declarations globally on the rights of everyone to education. The document makes reference to the United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* on 10 December 1948 and the United Nations *Charter of the Rights of the Child* of 20 November 1959. The Church's mission is not separated from the goal of education defined by secular authorities, because part of her mission of being a Mystery of salvation is the promotion of everything that promotes the welfare of the whole human person. Education is one of those aspects of the human person which enables the person to pursue his divinely ordered end. It is in this light that the Catholic Church affirms that central to her mission as both a mother and a teacher is education especially of the young people. The Declaration in the preface states that the authors were only laying down fundamental principles for education, which could be developed in later documents in the post-conciliar era and appropriated to local circumstances.

Article 1 affirms that education is the inalienable right of every person irrespective of age, race or condition. This right to education is grounded on the dignity of the human person, and must respect each person's social and cultural location, religious aspirations and tailored to the needs and unique talents and gifts of each student. The Declaration defines education this way: "True education is directed towards the formation of the human person in view of his final end and the good of that society to which he belongs and in the duties of which he will, as an adult, have a share" (GE, 1965: 1).

The aim of education is shown in this documents to include the following among others: creating a culture of peace among all men and women across cultures, religions and nations; formation of the young to grow into maturity in integrating their lives and sexuality in a holistic manner; creating a tolerant world where people

respect cultural differences and a world free from racism, sexism, classism etc. The goal of education is also to help young people make sound moral judgement through “a well-formed conscience and to put them into practice with a sense of personal commitment.”

Article 2 defends not only the universal right to education, but also the specific right of Catholics to have a faith-based education. This is a key article which has guided the Catholic Church in Canada especially in Ontario in her fight with the government over the right of Catholics to a separate (faith-based) education. Catholic education is presented here as the immersion of the young into the mysteries of God, participation in church sacraments and liturgical celebrations, and living out of their Christian faith in the public.

Education is the right of all and there are different degrees of competence in the area of education, as well as co-operation between the family, the church and the state in this regard. It is ‘the gravest obligation’ of parents to educate their children (article 3). The family is seen as the principal school for the social virtues necessary to every society and the primary locus for the cultivation of the religious and ecclesial spirit. Society helps the parents in this regard, and, indeed, civil authorities have the right to help parents to realise their vocation of educating their children. This is founded on the principle of the common good which the state serves and promotes. Here the principle of subsidiarity is employed, which states that you cannot take away from a small group what it can do for itself and place it in a higher group. Thus, state monopoly of schools is opposed to this principle. The Church on her part claims for herself in this document a right to educate the young not only because “she is a society capable of imparting education, but because of her duty of proclaiming the way of salvation to all men, of revealing the life of Christ to those who believe and of assisting them with unremitting care so that they may be able to attain to the fullness of that life” (Article 3). This right of education on the part of the Church is not restricted to her members but to the whole world and is oriented towards making

the world a better place.

The final teaching on education is in article 4 which states that the Church appreciates every means of education, but noting that the chief way by which the Church educates is through catechetical instruction. Here again, the confusion between sacred education and secular education is evident. If the Church uses catechetical instruction mainly to educate, how can catechesis impart scientific education, for instance? Catechesis, as Ratzinger (1997: 57) argues following the teaching of *Evangelii Nutiandi* on new evangelization, is a moment in the process of evangelisation:

Catechesis aims at coming to know Jesus concretely. It is theoretical and practical initiation into the will of God as revealed in Jesus and lived by the community of the Lord's disciples, the family of God. On the one hand, the necessity of catechesis follows from the intellectual dimension of the Gospel itself. The Gospel addresses itself to reason; it responds to man's longing to understand the world and himself and to discover the way to do justice to his essential being. In this sense, catechesis is instruction and the early Christian teachers were really the founders of the state of catechists in the Church (Ratzinger, 1997: 57).

The specific task of catechizing according to the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples includes "educating young people and adults in the faith, preparing candidates and their families for the sacraments of Christian initiation, and helping with retreats and other meetings connected with catechesis" (Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, 1995: 11). There is a radical difference, then, between catechesis as involving the educational process and education understood in classic sense as training of mind and body for the realisation of the full human potential. Article 4, however, underlies the goal of catechesis as the presentation of the doctrine of redemption, clarification and exposition of doctrine and leading the

unfolding of this mystery in the lives of individuals for the good of society.

2.3.2 On Catholic schools in general

Article 5 states that apart from the family (the first and fundamental school of formation), the most important organ of education is the school. The school is important because, “in nurturing the intellectual faculties which is its special mission, it develops a capacity for sound judgment and introduces the pupils to the cultural heritage bequeathed to them by former generations. It fosters a sense of values and prepares them for professional life.”

Thus, because of this importance of schools, teachers should be well-chosen, as they play a very pivotal role in the formation of the students in the name of the community. The Declaration actually calls teaching a vocation (Article 5) and proposes that teachers should have some special qualities and be adaptive to change when it states: “This vocation requires special qualities of mind and heart, most careful preparation and a constant readiness to accept new ideas and to adapt the old.” The right of parents to choose schools for their children is upheld as part of the freedom they enjoy as citizens of a country. Two principles are invoked in this regard, i.e. the principle of distributive justice which calls on public authorities to allocate funds to schools as an essential part of the common good and the principle of subsidiarity which is aimed at safeguarding the right of both the Church and parents to choose between the public and private schools where they wish to train their children. All kinds of monopoly of the educational sector by the state are seen as inconsistent with the liberality and pluralism which the authors argue should exist in contemporary societies (GE, 1965: 6). The Declaration acknowledges the right of non-Catholic schools to exist alongside Catholic schools and other schools. However, because of the grave obligation of the moral and religious education of the young, special pastoral care should be given to children who attend non-Catholic schools (GE, 1965: 7). A special appeal is made to parents on the need for them to safeguard

the moral and religious formation of their children who attend public schools. The authors of this document also commend the public authorities who recognize the religious pluralism of the times and support parents in the task of ensuring that the right of their children to moral and religious education is upheld.

2.3.3 Why Catholic schools?

The Declaration offers a very significant answer to the question: What is a Catholic school? It entails three inclusive realities but the understanding of a Catholic school is a theological concept rooted in Christ rather than a sociological reality. This is very important in understanding the integrity and organic nature of Catholic education; it also immediately shows why an abstracted notion of community of faith based on normative thinking poses a limiting framework. This is because it hampers the inevitable mutual dislocation of diverse viewpoints needed in bringing about a synergy of concepts for an education that is faith-based on one hand and also accommodating of the specific civic cultural requirements for citizenship irrespective of faith claims.

In the first place, a Catholic school is a school established and managed by the institutional church, be it a parish, a diocese, or a congregation or a group of Catholic faithful. In the second sense, a Catholic school is a school which has a distinctively Catholic programme. This programme integrates a comprehensive scheme for education founded on Christian principles with the goal of enlivening the secular realm with the fruits of the Gospel by making the Church present to the world and the world present to the Church. The programme is also integrated into the general faith formation of the young in keeping with the mission of the Church of bringing salvation to all humanity. Catholic school provides the locus for an encounter with God; it also provides an education that is centred on the message of salvation which

is an organic principle of all human cultures. Thirdly, a Catholic school has a specific Catholic character and that is the desire to promote “a spirit of liberty and charity based on the Gospel” (GE, 1965: 8). Freedom as a pedagogical principle postulates an inward inspiration on the force of truth to convict and compel (*Dignitatis Humanae*, 1965: 1-2):

The Church in the world demands a school that is in the world. Christian education ought thoroughly to immunize young people against the manifest dangers of our modern world, and make them capable of a Christian mastery of the world. ...A school that maintains a Catholic breadth and openness can do much to repair the present deficiency in education forming leaders, who will exercise an excellent apostolate by acting as a leaven in Church and state. This apostolate is the principle and crown of Christian education (Pohlschneider, 1969: 31-32).

In sum, this Catholic document declares that Catholic school should exist by right as independent of state interference. In that light, the church claims that she has the right to establish her own faith-based schools; Catholic schools are presented as helping to promote and preserve the common good and should be characterized by a spirit of liberty, openness, dialogue and love as befits the children of God. The schools should be characterised by a spirit of freedom of the children of God. However, the faith-based foundation and orientation of all education in the Catholic schools is emphasized. The school should be a centre for the promotion of dialogue and tolerance between the Church and the world. The individual, like the Church, is called to realise himself through conscious and free decisions and it should be the task of the Catholic school to lead the young to this realization (Wojtyla, 1979: 35-36). These lofty objectives of Catholic education can only be realised if the schools have teachers who are “possessed with apostolic spirit,” “bear testimony by their lives and their teaching to the one Teacher, who is Christ,” and who have the adequate learning and

expertise to bring up the children cooperating with their parents to the perfection of the life of faith.

Finally, parents are called upon: that it is their duty “to send their children to Catholic schools and wherever possible to support the Catholic schools in their work for the good of the children” (GE, 1965: 8). It is the duty of the members of the Church to make the Catholic schools more effective. This is particularly demanded of pastors. Article 9 lists the various forms of Catholic schools and underlies the necessity of connecting them to the principles of Catholic education which are not alien to specialised institutions. In article 10 the importance of Catholic faculties is underlined because they make real the public, perpetual and universal presence of Christian thought amidst the ebb and flow of cultures. It states the importance of establishing more Catholic universities in more countries. They should be noteworthy more because of the high quality of their education than of their number (GE, 1965: 10). Catholic universities serve the interest of the world as well as the Church in the following additional ways: in the training and formation of candidates for priesthood and in religious life, in the education of the non-ordained ministers and lay members of the church to play their part in the life of the Church and the world, and the task of upholding the intellectual life of the church and of society. They should also play a significant role in the ecumenical dialogue with other Christians and non-Christians as well.

Article 12 stresses the necessity of closer collaboration between the separate scholastic institutes (as for example between different faculties in Catholic universities), and also between Catholic schools and likewise between Catholic and non-Catholic schools, to the advancement of the whole of human society. There is a strong word of gratitude to all the people who are involved in Christian education, especially the priests, laity and religious and all those involved in the evangelical dedication to Christian pedagogy. The document, *Catholic School* (1977), took up this teaching further when it proposes that Christ, the teacher offers through his teaching

ministry a foundation and model for Catholic education especially in the unity of all knowledge and the promotion of sound and faith-based humanistic values. Catholic schools are, viewed in this light, Catholic schools are presented as sites for the education and equipping of the new disciples of Christ, those who are to be formed and shaped to become like Christ. This is re-affirmed in the important document, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1988) when the authors write:

The Catholic school fully enters into the salvific mission of the Church... (which)....involves a sincere adherence to the Magisterium of the Church, a presentation of Christ as the supreme model of the human person, and a special care for the quality of the religious education (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988: 38).

Therein lies the need for faith formation in the Catholic school as a primary means for evangelisation. Faith formation—the education through which the Catholic Gospel is inculcated—promotes a number of important values: nurturing of the intellect; development of sound judgment; transmission of cultural heritage and traditions, and the fostering of standards of behaviour, including preparation for a faith-filled life. The school also has a dual task which is ‘the synthesis of faith and culture and a synthesis of faith and life’ (Catholic schools, 1977: 37).

Mckinney argues that the document proposes that Catholic schools should train students to be good citizens, to embrace the values of civic culture to the extent that it promotes the common good. However, he points out that this creates tension for the Catholic school, a tension which is a primary hypothesis of this thesis. According to Mckinney (2011: 153):

There can be creative tensions for the Catholic school as it strives to undertake this dual task of the two synthesis of faith and culture and faith and life in its daily operations as both a civic institution, a place of learning like others schools, and as a Christian community, a site for

religious formation. These two aspects (civic institution and Christian community) of the work of the Catholic school need to be kept in harmony and, at times, this can be challenging.

The climate of a Christian school should be perceptible. As students enter, they ought to feel that they are entering an environment inspired by faith, and uniquely different from the outside world although cognisant of it and its diversity (CCE, 1988: 25). “In a Catholic school, everyone should be aware of the living presence of Jesus” (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988: 25). The document proposes that the school environment should be deeply religious and should be conveyed in everything which is done in the school including teaching and learning, celebration and living out the Gospel values, living out lives which model the life of God, creating an atmosphere of friendship in the school where everyone accepts everyone as a friend in open and respectful relationships, and in being each other’s disposal. “If it is not present, then there is little left which can make the school Catholic” (CCE, 1988: 26).

The environment of a Catholic school should induce a sense of comfort and familiarity for the student (CCE, 1988: 27). This feeling should stem not only from the relationships with teachers and staff, but also from the environment. Though the school should be a model for evangelisation, it should also be mindful of the varying cultural milieus, traditions and backgrounds of its diverse student body. All of these elements will contribute to the Catholic Education of the student, and in turn, one hopes, inspire students to assume the responsibility for their growth in faith.

While the environment, climate, and educational goals might be steeped in Catholic Gospel values, they become invalid without religious instruction and religious educators to inspire faith and meaning in students. Perhaps the most prominent contributor is the teacher. “The religion teacher is the key, the vital component, if the educational goals of the school are to be achieved” (CCE, 1988: 96). Teachers, as the case study described by Hiebert et al.(2006: 131, 132-135, 137) in Chapter 9 of

Shaping Beloved Community: Multicultural Theological Education, are also crucial to achieving a broad and inclusive mentality in the school community and classrooms As Morris (2012: 19) proposes, the official documents of the Catholic church on education show among other things that the teaching of religion in the Catholic schools “enables rather than impedes the integral formation of children, which is consistent with and respectful of the positions of others, and to a more mature and holistic understanding of the people with contrary viewpoints” or contrary lifestyles or those with different interpretations of reality (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2003: 54). Morris’ position is supported by *the Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1988) when the authors propose with regard to teaching and learning among teachers and students in the Catholic school:

They should be open at all times to authentic dialogue, convinced that in these circumstances the best testimony that they can give of their own faith is a warm and sincere appreciation for anyone who is honestly seeking according to his or her own conscience (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988: 42).

This allowance for following one’s conscience as both teacher and student in Catholic education is one of the platforms on which one could build a theory of dissent in Catholic education (McDonough, 2012: 37-83), and as will be shown in this thesis is the major source of internal conflict between board policies, Catholic position on diversity and equity, and that of the Catholic teachers as constantly expressed through the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association (OECTA).

Finally the official church’s teaching on education, especially in three documents, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith* (1982), *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1998), and *Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission Between Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful* (2007), takes up different aspects of the challenges of “the unexpected and often contradictory evolution of our

age”, which gives “rise to educational challenges that pose questions for the school world.” These cultural forces, like globalisation, cultural pluralism, the problem of migration and civil conflicts, diversity and marginalisation of minorities, according to the document forces Catholic education “to seek appropriate answers not only as regards contents and didactic methods, but also as regards the *community experience* that is a mark of educational activity” (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2007: 1). There is a strong accent placed on the role of teachers as agents for the integral human formation of students and young people (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982: 15). Reading this document, one can conclude that for Catholic education the role of teachers is not simply instrumental, but they are also faith formators, who model their teaching through their own example of faith, and who grow in their faith through teaching. There is thus the need for them to be people of faith, who embrace the teaching and position of the Church on Catholic education, and who constantly update their knowledge and faith development through the use of formal and informal, spiritual and academic means for growing into the full stature of Christ (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982: 60, 64-66). Specific issues in Catholic education like sexuality, sex education, prejudice reduction, racism, etc., were not specifically handled by any of these documents. Besides the document *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality* (1995), most of the documents on sexual orientation and racism education in Catholic education were formulated within the last ten years and will be broached in our review of the specific appropriation of diversity and equity education by Catholic schools. However, the principles which informed them are already contained in the documents which we have reviewed.

In sum, Catholic education is the educational attempt to enable student to develop a “synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life” (CCE, 1977: 37). This is an education that has principles which promote community, civil society, diversity, pluralism, inclusivity, and both social responsibility and solidarity. Catholic education then has as its principal purpose this goal: “that the baptised, while they are gradually introduced to the knowledge of the mystery of salvation, become ever more aware of the gift of faith they have received and that they learn in addition how to worship God the Father in spirit and truth especially in liturgical action, and that they are to bear witness to hope by contributing to the good of the whole society through authentic

exercise of human freedom” (CCE, 1977: 37).

2.4 Diverse interpretations of Catholic education and the question of diversity and multicultural education in the Ontario Separate School system

The central challenge of the separate school board in Ontario is how to maintain its distinctive Catholic identity while fulfilling its duties as a publicly-funded educational system which must respect, promote and preserve Canadian multiculturalism and the province’s equity and diversity policies and strategies. This challenge is made more complex by the fact that within the Catholic educational community, stakeholders, including teachers, school administrators, parents, and church officials (especially bishops under auspices the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops) do not agree on some of the fundamental Catholic educational principles on the distinctiveness of Catholic education, the teaching of the church on sexuality, sexual morality, same-sex relationships, and human dignity with regard to equity and diversity (Bibby, 2009: 56-57). This fundamental challenge creates an internal conflict with the Catholic education boards, Catholic schools, Catholic parishes and Catholic families and the Catholic hierarchy about fidelity to the principles, policies, and programs for realising the graduate expectations of Catholic students, and meeting the requirements of the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Education, as defined by Ratna Ghosh, is a “deliberate, planned experience designed to transmit certain values, knowledge, and skills” (Ghosh, 1995: 3). Education, though not synonymous with socialisation, plays a role in its process (Ghosh, 1995: 3). In this capacity, education plays a pivotal role in social change (Portelli, 2001: 19). In Canada, for instance, a country populated by diverse ethnic and cultural population with an official policy on multiculturalism, education “is inextricably bound to ideas of self-knowledge or identity, as well as to empowerment, which means ‘becoming more than we are’” (Ujimoto, 1991: 134). In this context, “to be educated means to know ourselves: who we are, where we are in time and space, where we have been and where we are going, and what our responsibilities are to ourselves and to others” (Levin & Wallin, 2007: 6). In this way, education and self- knowledge cannot “be separated from an awareness of the social context in which we live our lives, the two

kinds of knowledge being not merely interdependent 'but ultimately one and the same'" (Levin & Wallin, 2007: 3).

Education, in Canada and in most Western systems, viewed as the process of "acquiring self-knowledge" is "not simply socialisation into existing ways of thinking", but rather a sense that:

people must play an active and critical role in creating their knowledge. It must be an active and purposeful endeavour that informs our actions and provides the understanding, skills, and dispositions that enable people to grow and to exercise more control over the ways in which they live their lives within their social, communal, and ecological contexts (Levin and Wallin, 2007: 6).

What then is the importance of Catholic schools, particularly in relation to diversity and inclusive education? How do scholars, practitioners, and theologians see the role of Catholic schools in a changing Canadian cultural and demographic landscape? Most scholars agree with the official position of the Catholic Church that Catholic schools, among all sources of education, serve a special purpose. The Catholic school is:

designed not only to develop with special care the intellectual faculties but also to form the ability to judge rightly, to hand on the cultural legacy of previous generations, to foster a sense of values, to prepare for professional life. Between pupils of different talents and backgrounds it promotes friendly relations and fosters a spirit of mutual understanding; and it establishes as it were a center whose work and progress must be shared together by families, teachers, associations of various types that foster cultural, civic, and religious life, as well as by civil society and the entire human community (GE, 1965: 5).

The fundamental purpose of the school is to inculcate values and to systematically transmit culture in the light of faith, in order to bring forth the power of Christian virtue (Esterline & Kalu, 2006: 43). But it does not end at the integration of faith and culture. It also leads students to a personal integration of faith and life through relationship and commitment to God and to their fellow human beings, be they of whatever race, creed and culture (Esterline & Kalu, 2004: 43). The very incarnation of Jesus “demands that we take culture seriously: for there is no ‘flesh’ that is not nourished by a culture. No ‘word’ can be heard that is not the language of a culture” (Esterline & Kalu, 2006: 43). In this modern era, the experience of the salvific mission of the Church in relation to multiculturalism and diversity, “presents both opportunity and challenge”. “Given this context, there is greater opportunity than ever before to embrace and nurture... ‘hospitable kinship’. That is, diversity beckons us to enter into a hospitable teaching and learning space that, to use Parker Palmer’s words, ‘makes possible persons’ receiving each other, our struggles, our newborn ideas with openness and care” (Esterline & Kalu, 2006: 96).

The Canadian Catholic School Trustees’ Association (CCSTA) in *Build Bethlehem Everywhere: A Statement on Catholic Education* (2005) along with Dennis J. Murphy argue that education—especially Catholic education—is at the heart of the mission of the Church, with Christ as the foundation of this mission (CCSTA, 2005: introduction). Because of this relationship between Church and education, the Catholic school is committed to the spiritual development of students (Murphy, 2003: 1,7,7). This is so since “all human values find their fulfillment and unity in Christ and in the Church” (CCSTA, 2005: 14-15). As a result, the Church establishes her own schools, which are considered privileged means of promoting the formation of humanity (Murphy, 2002: 8, 15). This form of education is not about:

stockpiling the knowledge of the past, an approach Paolo Freire condemned as a ‘banking’ concept in which students amass knowledge, but rather, it is about using knowledge to evaluate and participate in the life of the present with the aim of shaping the future (Osborne, 2001:14

).

As such, schools are “the centre in which specific concepts of the world, humanity; democracy and history are developed” (Schall, 1999: 129). Indeed, the school has always been a place of intersection of the world, of humanity and of history (Murphy, 2002: 10). Education continues to be promoted around the world and has become, as Maritain notes, a pillar of culture even in small, remote communities (Palms, 1999: 19-20). In this light, we agree that every human person of every race, condition, and age have the inalienable right or “equality of opportunity” to education (Ghosh & Ray, 1995: 241). In the Canadian context the educational opportunity for all finds its provisions in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Ghosh & Ray, 1995: 54). In promoting broader cultural as well as individual evolution, Catholic instruction is no different from secular education. However, the way this is interpreted in the writings of scholars greatly varies in some of the literatures reviewed below.

A collection of essays in *Discipline, Devotion and Dissent* (2013) addresses these challenges and to a large extent underlie the missing link which this thesis addresses. These essays focus on four major themes namely; the historical and contextual nature of the challenges facing the Catholic schools in Ontario today with regard to diversity and multiculturalism; the reasons for these challenges; the dimensions of these challenges; and the threats which failure to address them pose to the long term survival of Catholic schooling in Ontario. Two other essays from Merry (2007) and Wylie (2004), show that this challenge is not only limited to Ontario, but that they appear to be emerging globally as a necessary consequence of pluralism and failure of states and churches to find a golden mean.

McDonough, Memon and Mintz (2013) write that the 2007 Ontario provincial election brought educational questions of faith-based schools and social cohesion into high relief. This was because one of the candidates for premier, John Tory, had campaigned that he would extend full government funding to every faith-based school in the province including Islamic schools. These authors argue that, “Tory’s proposal

resurrected more than simply the debate about Ontario's current public funding model for faith-based schools. It also raised fundamental questions about the place of faith-based schools" (2013: 1). How do we reconcile the secularity of the state with the confessional concerns of faith-based schools? Can cultural pluralism and education of students on civic culture as embodied in the state's social and cultural policies and programmes be compatible with a traditionally restricted normative moral and ethical ethos of faith-based schooling? It is this tension which concerns this thesis with regard to the question of equity and diversity in addressing the specific needs of students from minority groups especially those from the African-Canadian communities, and students with homosexual orientation in the publicly-funded separate schools in Ontario. How the tension be addressed where both the state and the church have different narratives on equity, inclusion and diversity, and where the state funds the church's delivery of education? How does this tension play out in the formulation of policies in the separate school boards, and in the interpretation and application of the equity and inclusivity strategy by school principals and teachers at the school level? This is because developing an inclusivity strategy around a board policy does not in itself translate into enacting practical and concrete daily actions and educational reform programs which lead to an inclusive school culture. This reflects the persistent challenge in all educational system of bridging the gap between good intentions and their practical enactment and translation in concrete situation.

D'Souza (2013: 46) argues that too much effort is being placed in public debate on the distinctiveness of Catholic education to its funding status or to its relationship to provincial politics and its historical evolution. However, he argues that the nature, purpose and aim of Catholic education are in themselves universal in nature because they are grounded on Christian anthropology and the centrality of faith and socialization of students into this universal faith as goal in the Catholic educational system. He argues that it is possible to maintain the priorities and practices of Catholic educational philosophy, while at the same time serving the overall goal of

citizenship formation for the students because the Catholic educational principles are aimed at educating a religiously and culturally diverse citizenry for life in common, particularly in relation to the common good.

D'Souza (2013: 61) proposes that one must conceive of Catholic education as structured in a manner which upholds the dignity of the human person rooted in an integral Christian anthropology on human rights. The four-fold aspects of education—knowing, learning, choosing, and acting—he argues must have an experiential base, hence Catholic education integrates faith and culture, faith and reason, faith and science; it also respects diversity, autonomy, and unity understood as integration in the students. He argues further:

While the actions, choices, and decisions of interest to religious educators of different faiths may well be diverse, each tradition has a responsibility to prepare its adherents to take their place as citizens in political society: 'education in pluralism extends beyond the local group and presents ideas of justice and fairness as proper expectations for all members of the society, including those whose beliefs and values are shaped by religious traditions that are considerably different from one's one' (D'Souza, 2013: 61).

D'Souza concludes that there are two most important ways of carrying out diversity education in the Catholic schools; the first is the diversity of the curriculum and the unity of this diversity in the person of the teacher. However, since the formation of the teachers in Catholic education in Ontario is self-directed, even though there are some requirements and educational standards for teachers of religious education, he points out that there are multiple instances of evidence that the instrumental role of teachers in realising the promise of diversity in Catholic schools has been one of the weak components in the attainment of the ideals set out in board policies.

D'Souza's philosophical analysis offers a key hermeneutics for reading the key texts in Catholic educational principles and practices of the last fifty years which I analysed in the first part of this chapter, and sheds light on the strengths and weaknesses of the Catholic approaches and the challenges which they present to the separate school system in Ontario. Some of these challenges were already debated and analysed in seminal essays by Groome, Hollenbach, Grace, McLaughlin and McClelland, in *The Contemporary Catholic School: Context, Identity and Diversity* (1996). D'Souza, however, draws from recent teaching and findings from social sciences to give a distinctive Canadian historical contextualization of the problem. He thus raises key questions on the aims, goals, and foundations of Catholic education which affect the way that the Catholic school responds to social changes which inform the state educational policies. This is particularly so in Ontario where the Catholic schools are publicly funded and are required by law then to follow the guidelines and principles set by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

In a very illuminating essay in his edited collection of essays titled, *Faith Schools in the Twenty-First Century*, Stephen McKinney (2008: 1) calls for a greater understanding of the issues of diversity and pluralism in faith-based schools, especially the Catholic schools. He writes from a British perspective but at the same time develops universal principles which should guide the state and Catholic schools in respecting each other's sphere in other non-British contexts. He argues that while collaborating in promoting and preserving the common good, there is need to understand and integrate a greater critical awareness of the spectrum of conceptual lenses (sociological, philosophical, theological, educational and political) which map the landscape of this debate.

McKinney points out that it is necessary in raising question as to how a faith-based school could promote or undermine civic culture to understand the model of education and schooling which such a faith-based school embodies. One can look at a faith-based school from the perspective of its position within the national educational

systems (state-funded, partially funded, independent). Faith schools can also be looked at from the perspective of their theological rationale and the weighting accorded to this rationale, and how the school integrates its educational principles with its theologically-grounded rationale for existing (McKinney, 2008: 1). Viewed in this light, McKinney argues that there are intrinsic and extrinsic rationales, both of which could overlap in arguing for or against faith schooling. McKinney maintains that this is a debate which cannot be easily resolved as this has formed the fundamental plank of ongoing tension and conflicts in the some predominant Western educational systems since the turn of the new millennium. He shows that leading journals and publishers have engaged this argument with varying conclusions which all heighten and harden the positions on both sides of the spectrum. Some of these publications include the special edition of the *Oxford Review of Education* (2001), which explored the philosophical concerns through articles defending the role of faith schooling (Jewish, Muslim, Church of England and Catholic) in the integral formation of students in diverse communities in the United Kingdom.

The *British Journal of Religious Education* (2003) collected topics under the title, *Faith Schools: Consensus or Conflict*, the edited collection by Gardner et al.(2005) and *Reflecting on Faith Schools* edited by Johnson (2006) all contain different sociological, philosophical, educational and theological arguments on how faith schools can play an important role in promoting civic culture, and the challenges and limitations of various approaches by different faith-based schools. Parker-Jenkins et al. (2005) offer insight into some of the new dimensions and ramifications of these challenges when it applies to integration of ethnic communities in multicultural countries like the United Kingdom and Canada. The fundamental question which McKinney raises which is of some significance to this thesis from the collection of essays in his volume and the review of some of the recent literature in his work is: "Should the state fund, or partially fund, faith schools that, by definition of their theological rational, engage in forms of faith formation, religious nurture and preservation of religious identity?" (McKinney, 2008: 7).

The answer to this question is one that most Western societies are struggling to answer either through soft liberalism or hard liberalism, a concept which hard-nosed conservatives find irreconcilable to their own normative understanding of order and culture. This is because the question of diversity and multicultural education draws the line of battle between those who believe that the decline in the practice of the Christian faith in a post-Christian West is a result of the decline in religious education and the secularisation of the state in Canada, for example. Such people also view multiculturalism negatively as some miniaturisation or atomisation of ethnic cultural subjects and minorities instead of socialising them into the predominant Western way of life. The liberal position straddles between two extremes of accepting the secularity of the state as an irreducible social ethos which should govern the state agencies, especially when it comes to education which is the primary source which the state uses to acculturate her citizens into a common civic culture, and hence its integrative and constitutive goal. There is also the other extreme of soft liberals who are seeking for a golden mean between maintaining the mainstream culture and epistemology in the schools, while tolerating the minorities.

In a sense, the hidden curriculum which often hampers the equity educational goal of prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and which is often the result of a predominant social reproductive pattern, looms large here as relativised by the soft liberals. Arguing for a soft liberal position, Ken Wylie in "Citizenship, Identity and Social Inclusion: Lessons from Northern Ireland" (2004), notes that "respect for diversity is normally interpreted to mean according equal respect to the beliefs and values of different cultures" (2004: 237). However, Wylie argues further that tension often arise among educators where there is a failure to understand the rationale and practices for embracing the ideals of diversity and to link it with the search for answers to the challenges facing modern pluralistic societies about social inclusion and exclusion in societies, especially where minorities face limitations which raise conflicts in the fight for recognition among the dominant groups.

Writing under the heading, “Canadian Catholic Schools: Sacred and Secular Tensions in a Free and Democratic Society”, Donlevy (Donlevy, 2013: 121) argues that the goal of the Catholic educational principles when viewed through the lens of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom should not conflict with the policies and programs of the state with regard to education for diversity and multiculturalism since both are aimed at promoting the common good, respect for the alterity of the ‘other’, while promoting fairness and embodying the values and virtues of democracy.

Donlevy has contributed extensively to research on the legal, theological, cultural and ethical issues involved in diversity and multiculturalism in the sometimes conflicting goals and approaches to education between the state and the Catholic Church in Canada. His authoritative work on diversity and multicultural education in Canada’s separate school system is the *Ten Dimensions of Inclusion: Non-Catholic Students in Catholic Schools* (2009). Donlevy, through extensive ethnographic studies in two provinces, Alberta and Saskatchewan, sought to answer some of the following questions among many others in his field research: “What are the real life experiences of Catholic students and teachers in their relationships with non- Catholic students in Catholic schools? What meanings do those Catholic students and teachers attach to their experiences in terms of the sense of their own faith both personally and within the Catholic school faith community? What Catholic school and Catholic high school policies are in place which govern the admission of non-Catholic students? Does the non-Catholic student experience a sense of being the *other* within the Catholic high school community?” (Donlevy, 2009:IX).

His conclusions are that the Catholic schools in Canada are becoming increasingly pluralistic because they are now admitting more non-Catholic students into Catholic schools more than was the case in the past. However, this is raising new questions which were not addressed in the past on diversity and multiculturalism in terms of

the socio-cultural dimension of inclusion. As a result of the changing cultural landscape of Canada, which is affecting the demographics of Catholic schools, there is the need for greater research in Catholic schooling about diversity and equity issues. He predicts that given the increasing cultural diversity of the Canadian population, multicultural sensitivity will be a special challenge for religious educators in the 21st century. However, his analysis was based on one overarching consideration: How Catholic schools could bring about the objectives outlined in the Congregation for Catholic Education's document (1988).

This document proposes that "the primary mission of Catholic schools should be to create the educational climate, the personal development of each student, and seek a harmonious relationship between culture and the Gospel and the illumination of all knowledge with the light of faith." As a result, his analysis of the dimensions of inclusion (socio-cultural, legal, racial, psychological, political, financial, legal, administrative, pedagogical, and spiritual) reflects the complexities involved in keeping a delicate balance between maintaining the priorities and identities of the Catholic schools (especially when they are publicly funded) in the evangelising mission of the Catholic Church, and the openness to diversity and inclusion required by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms with regard to diversity and multiculturalism.

This work and many other writings of Donlevy represent an initial attempt to seek pathways to embracing diversity and multiculturalism in Catholic schools. However, the work drew its data from the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan and not from Ontario, which is the focus of our research. Secondly, the work is concerned with non-Catholics who are being educated in Catholic schools, but our research is concerned with a scientific study of the policies of the separate school boards with regard to students with homosexual orientation and Black students in the Separate School Boards in Ontario whether they are Catholics or non-Catholics. While some of the principles in Donlevy's works will be helpful, they will only be used as

foundational and historical resources showing the tension which exists in questions about diversity and multiculturalism in Catholic schools. This is particularly so when the common curriculum on religious education seeks to address the needs of Catholics in a generic way through a generic metaphysical notion of human identity without taking account of the minorities, their cultural modeling, and sexual differentiation. These needs are there whether the people involved are Catholic or non-Catholic students and these needs are not met under the mainstream educational model and practices which have been entrenched in the separate school systems for over a hundred years.

Donlevy's essay (2013) builds on the preceding argument in the *Ten Dimensions of Inclusion*, especially locating the discourse in the context of multicultural and diversity education of minorities especially in Ontario. In this essay, he chronicles a few instances of social tension between Catholic values enacted especially through the publicly-funded separate school boards, and Canadian secular values. Of significance to this thesis is the landmark case of Mr Hall, a gay Catholic high-school student from Whitby, Ontario who wanted his male lover to join him at the students' prom and was barred by the school board even though the union representing the teachers in Catholic schools in the province, OECTA, supported Mr Hall attending the dance with his friend. The board hinged her decision on the fact that allowing Mr Hall to attend the dance would mean implicitly approving homosexual relations which are opposed by the Catholic Church as intrinsically disordered. Mr Hall took the case to the Ontario Human Rights Commission and won.

Donlevy's analysis of this case and other four cases he mentions reveal fundamental philosophical, anthropological, political and legal differences between the official Catholic positions on human nature, human rights, same-sex unions, and a God-centered ethical framework, and that of the secular Canadian state. Also related to

this is foundational rupture between these two views, especially with regard to the ordering of society and natural law versus positivist theory of law: What is the basis for accepting the laws of the state which is opposed to one's conscience as a person of faith? Why should a teacher or a student obey the laws and practices of the church in the Catholic school which in conscience opposes his or her perception of dignity and respect of people irrespective of their color or sexuality or creed? Donlevy's conclusion is presented this way:

the legal divide between the secular and the Catholic view is that laws that are promulgated through human rights legislation but that do not conform to Catholic anthropology and philosophy ought not to be followed by Catholic schools, as they are no valid laws—as far as the concept of natural law is understood by the Catholic Church (Donlevy, 2013: 133).

Donlevy, however, did not answer the question of what Catholic teachers should do if in his or her classroom he or she has to obey his or her conscience when the teacher does not accept the teaching of the Church, and prefers that of the state which the church opposes in her educational system.

This has been the subject of the research of McDonough especially in his revised doctoral thesis, *Beyond Obedience and Abandonment: Toward a Theory of Dissent in Catholic Education* (McDonough, 2012: 3). McDonough argues that in considering the many contested questions in Catholic education, there should be genuine effort to avoid a binary understanding and interpretation of Catholicism. He proposes that it is simplistic to think of Catholic educational philosophy as a normative cargo delivered to teachers and students and which they embrace happily without questioning. He calls for a more experiential base and a more evidence-based approach to dealing with questions of diversity and multiculturalism in the Catholic schools. He argues that his research;

exposes a pedagogical tension that arises when competing visions of

Catholic morality and the Catholic common good appear in the school. The school has a responsibility to present and uphold magisterial teaching, on the one hand, but on the other hand there is also an imperative to teach students to respond well to difference and to make positive contributions to the groups in which they participate even if in disagreement” (McDonough, 2013: 191).

McDonough’s primary thesis is that without taking into consideration the experience of the students, the educational system will fail because the success of the educational enterprise depends on the extent to which the perspectives and experiences of all the participants (education board leaders, students in the classrooms, teachers, parents, church, etc.) are taken into consideration. As a result, a one-sided approach to teaching controversial topics is bound to meet with resistance and is potentially harmful because the best form of education is one that is experiential. Using the tropes offered by Miller and Seller, McDonough (2013:192) shows that using the experience of all participants in the educational enterprise in the Catholic school will move education in the Catholic school systems from *transmission* (one-way delivery of information and values in a fashion exclusively partial to the established truths) through *transaction* (where the students’ opinions and experience offer data for teaching and learning) to *transformation* (envisioning students moving away from the role of ‘receivers of teachings’ and toward a public stance as ‘critically faithful actors in dialogue with teachings and their loyal criticism’).

The tension between transmission of mainstream knowledge with the replication of patterns of social exclusion and social reproduction and the transactional transformative approach which embodies an empirical notion of culture and education plays out every day in Ontario’s separate schools. This tension is not simply as a result of Canada’s convoluted and complex enactment of its constitutional

multiculturalism through diversity and equity education; it is largely in part because of the normative reading of Catholic educational aims and goals. This tension is well-documented in current research about Catholic education in Canada as well as elsewhere. In a pioneering work, *The Catholic School and the Common Good*, Bryk et al. (1993: 193, 302) draw from an ethnographic study in the USA on Catholic schooling, and identify some significant challenges facing Catholic education in maintaining fidelity to the distinctiveness of Catholic education, and also playing a significant role in a society where the issues of diversity, market value education, and new-right ideology are predominant. Bryk et al. will maintain that Catholic educational commitment to 'an inspirational ideology', respect for human dignity, social justice and the common good, especially since the transformations and reforms of the Second Vatican Council have all contributed in softening Catholic claims to universal truth. The argument being proposed here is that Catholic education should no longer be interpreted as unchanging in its principles and practices. Rather, as it is being framed and reformulated in contemporary times it guarantees that students trained in the Catholic schools will have a strong social ethic as good citizens. David Hollenbach (1996: 90) agrees with this when he writes:

During the period leading up to the Second Vatican Council and following after it, the Catholic tradition has been engaged in efforts to develop these traditional resources in ways that make them usable in the context of acknowledged pluralism. Continuation of the process of retrieving and adapting these resources holds promise of enabling Catholic education to make a distinctive contribution to the renewed pursuit of the common good today.

Grace, building on the research of Bryk et al. and his own research in the United Kingdom argues rather persuasively:

In all cases these analyses have noted the tensions and dilemmas which occur when Catholic schooling values (which are themselves in a process of change) encounter situations of rapid social, cultural and

ideological change. The Catholic schooling system has been historically relatively insulated in various ways from the changes in secular culture in America, Australia and Britain. Catholic schools in these societies were constructed as defensive citadels for minority communities anxious to preserve the transmission of the faith and for minority communities anxious to preserve the transmission of the faith and of its spiritual and moral codes and symbols (Grace, 1996: 72).

Ann Casson's *Fragmented Catholicity and Social Cohesion* (2013), using the conclusions of these authors and her own ethnographic study of three Catholic secondary schools in England, charts a new path for inclusion within the Catholic schools which is of significance in understanding the different responses from social scientist to the challenges and opportunities of diversity and multicultural education in Canada. The author's primary concern is to engage in the Catholic secondary school debate, by exploring how faith-based schools respond to two major challenges. The first qualm is maintaining Catholicity in the face of cultural pluralism, and the second area of focus is the notion of social cohesion in an increasingly plural society. This entails understanding the faith school's relationship to the Catholic tradition that established it, as well as exploring the interactions between various faith and non-faith schools. Casson's conclusions suggest that students appear to connect to selective aspects of the Catholic tradition. A fragmented perception of Catholic identity is embodied, that is, Catholic identity is neither completely rejected nor is it a holistic appropriation of the tradition. Pertinent for exploring the Catholicity of the school culture is religious and spiritual capital. Casson maintains that faith schools are no longer generating religious capital attached to the Catholic Church as an institution, but instead developing a more fluid form of spiritual capital. The second concern is whether Catholic schools foster divisiveness in society by separating education based upon religious beliefs. Casson introduces the sociological categories of bonding and bridging capital. In her study, bonding capital offered a strong sense of school community despite the fact that it did not always extend to the church or local Catholic community. Bridging capital, the ability for members to connect with wider society, was found to be lacking in the Catholic schools which Casson focused on, for two reasons. First, this can be attributed to the inadequacies of the schools' admission policy to promote the interaction between faith and non-faith communities. As

well, the curriculum was not found to be reaching its fullest potential as a source of knowledge about other social groups within society. However, Casson's study ultimately presents inconclusive results about whether faith schools contribute to or detract from social cohesion. In this light, it is necessary to develop tools to understand how Catholic schools can contribute to social cohesion in societies while at same time holding on to her educational principles.

Casson's analysis draws attention to the works of Durkheim, in his classic study *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1971), which Gerard Grace's *Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets and Moral* (2002) argues "makes a sustained attempt, from the standpoint of religious sociology, to understand the nature of the sacred and of its relation to the profane in human societies" (Grace, 2002: 5). According to Grace, "for Durkheim, that which was sacred in a society referred to things which were superior in dignity and power to the elements of mundane life, to things 'set apart,' to notions of the transcendent and divine, of souls and of spirits and of the ultimate destiny of persons." The sacred was a representation of the Other in human existence, 'something added to and above the real' that which was holy, ineffable and mysterious. According to Grace, "religion, for Durkheim was the social and cultural form which regulated relations with the sacred and prescribed the necessary rites 'of oblation and communion, imitative rites, commemorative rites and expiatory rites'" (Grace, 2002: 5). However, Grace points out that there is constant tension in the Catholic educational system as well as in the wider Catholic community because of the failure to resolve this dualism. He makes this historical claim:

Catholic Christianity has always been characterised by two contrasting forms of relation to the external world. On the one hand there has been the notion that 'retreat from the world' may be necessary if the fullness of spiritual integrity and wisdom is to be obtained. On the other hand, there has been the imperative, from Christ Himself, to 'go out and convert all nations'. The history of Catholic practice thus illustrates forms of cultural retreatism (for the perfection and protection of the

sacred) existing at one and the same time with forms of cultural imperialism (for disseminating the knowledge of the sacred to a wider world) (Grace, 2002: 34).

However, scholars like MacMullen (2007: 33) writing in *Autonomy, Citizenship, and Religious Education in the Liberal State*, opposes any involvement of the state in faith-based schooling and concludes that faith-based schools like Catholic education or other forms are not suited for promoting diversity and multiculturalism because, he argues (falsely), that they are homogenous and fail to encourage routine educational interaction with those outside the faith community, and that they are also “ill-suited to prepare students for democratic citizenship because they do not govern their internal affairs in accordance with the principle of public reason and justification that are required of participants in the political sphere of liberal democratic societies” (2007: 33).

2.5 Review of research on the future of diversity and multicultural education in Ontario’s Separate School system: The secular-sacred divide

There has been no ethnographic study in Canada—especially in the three provinces where Catholic education is still publicly funded—on the challenges and opportunities facing Catholic schools in maintaining the distinctiveness of Catholic education and faithfully implementing the public policy on diversity and multiculturalism with regard to Black students and students with homosexual orientation. On the other hand, there is well-documented evidence of the prevalence of racism against Black students in Canada, and intolerance to students with homosexual orientation. Some of the important works are, Frances Henry and Carol Tator, *The Color of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society* (2006); Carol Tator and Frances Henry (2007), *Racial Profiling in Canada: Challenging the Myth of ‘A Few Bad Apples’*, Evelyn Kallen (2010), *Ethnicity and Human Rights in Canada*, third edition, to mention but a few.

Between 2011 and 2012, 16 high school students took their own lives because they

suffered discrimination as a result of their sexual orientation and there is increasing evidence that Canadian teens with same-sex attraction have a greater likelihood of suicide than heterosexual teens (See Alberta Civil Liberties Research Center, *Freedom to Be: A Teachers' Guide to Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Human Rights*, 2007). This report also shows that the death toll of students with homosexual orientation because of homophobia in our schools is growing exponentially since the 2003 report of the Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition, *The Cost of Homophobia: Literature Review of the Human Impact of Homophobia in Canada*. In 2008, the Toronto District School Board in response to the high incidence of racism against Black students and the low retention rate of Black students decided to establish the first Afrocentric school in Canada. The Ontario government enacted Bill 33, *Accepting Schools Act*, to create a safer school culture for all students, especially those with homosexual orientation.

However, there is an absence of empirical research to guide the formulation of strategies, especially in the separate school boards with regard to the effects of school culture and Catholic educational principles and Catholic teaching on Black students and students with homosexual orientation. The literature reviewed here, while containing helpful insights and materials for understanding the nature of the challenges and opportunities for diversity and multicultural education also show the paucity of evidence-base in formulation of policies. They also provide theoretical and practical insights into the meaning of diversity and multiculturalism education in relation to the challenges and opportunities faced within the education system, and the potential reform for future practice. The body of work dissects the inherent problems embedded in social structures, and unpacks the complexities of teaching or social change. The literature highlights the evolution of the meaning of diversity and equity education and the ramifications of the challenges facing school boards in general and faith-based (Catholic) schools in particular, especially when viewed from a non-confessional perspective.

James A Banks and Cherry McGee Banks (2004) have contributed copious research and analysis for understanding the challenges and opportunities for diversity and multicultural education which have influenced the understanding of the challenges and praxis for equity education in schools in North America. Two significant works in this regard are the collection of essays in the seventh edition of the influential, *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspective* (2010), and the magisterial *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education, 2nd Edition* (2004). According to James A Banks (2004), multicultural education based on recent research must be enacted in the following three ways:

- To reform the schools and other educational institutions so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups will experience educational equality;
- To give male and female students an equal chance to experience educational success and mobility; and
- An education which helps to promote the interaction of race, class, and gender in a healthy and open manner (2004: xi).

Banks argues further that this kind of approach will have multiple dimensions, namely: “institutional changes being made in the curriculum; the teaching materials; teaching and learning styles; the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of teachers and administrators; and the goals, norms and culture of the school.” According to Banks (2004: 1x), multicultural education is:

A field of study and an emerging discipline whose major aim is to create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class, and cultural groups. One of its important goals is to help all students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function effectively in a pluralistic democratic society and to interact, negotiate, and communicate with people from diverse groups to create a civic and moral community that works for the common good.

Banks offers five steps which must be taken in formulating any policy on diversity and multicultural education in a secular or faith-based setting: content integration, knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, and empowering school culture (James Banks & Cherry Banks, 2010: 23). These five-fold steps have become classic and have been integrated in the *Curriculum Guidelines for Multicultural Education* of the National Council for the Social Studies (1991), and the *Ontario's Equity and Diversity Document* (2008).

Darling-Hammond's (2010) *The Flat World and Education* shows the negative impact on the integral education of the young when nations and educational boards fail to adopt appropriate diversity and equity policies and programs in schools. She summarises and analyses recent developments in equity and diversity education in the theory, and practice related to the education of ethnic, racial, cultural and linguistic groups. The future of education and academic achievement relies heavily on improving the education system as a whole. This means that the educational system needs to be recalibrated in line with the new findings about equity. However, this is not easy in a society, "where liberal national values espouse individualism and competition while denying the ways in which historic, exclusionary practices and policies have placed members of particular racial groups in their current economic and academic predicaments" (Carter, 2011: 28). Darling-Hammonds proposes that more focus and emphasis should be placed on neglected minority students, through a change in policy and school reform to lessen the gap in educational achievements.

This is inclusive to implementing clear learning goals, reciprocal accountability to ensure skilled teaching, and adequately allocated resources. Specifically, this will involve "the improvement of race relations to assist in students' acquirement of knowledge, attitudes, and the skills necessary to participate in cross-cultural interaction and in personal, social, and civic action, will create a more democratic and just society" (Carter, 2011: 28).

Cochran-Smith's book *Walking the Road: Diversity and Social Justice in Teacher Education* (2004) proposes a renewed commitment to education that meets the needs

of racially and culturally diverse populations, while simultaneously being committed to equity and social justice. Cochran-Smith seeks to disprove the notion that providing qualified teachers is a technical problem of testing and training, or an issue of implementing policy. Rather, she maintains that teaching for social justice should be conceptualized as both 'a learning problem and political problem.' Cochran-Smith proposes that enhancing teacher quality is a problem of teacher learning. Creating highly qualified teachers to promote equity in the classroom involves diverging from the notion of short-term preparation programs, and following a new paradigm of education that recognises learning as a continual process. It is a process of unlearning, coupled with the restructuring of understanding in light of new information. This new paradigm for teacher education is based upon three premises which she develops :

Firstly, teacher education occurs 'in the context of inquiring communities where everyone is a learner and a researcher.' Secondly, inquiry is 'an intellectual and political issue rather than a project or time-bound activity.' Lastly, teacher inquiry is 'a way to generate local knowledge of practice that is contextualized, cultural, and critical.' This does not lead to specific teaching methods, but provides a perspective that informs future practices. The emphasis, she proposes, should shift from specific actions and teaching methods to having an awareness of teacher knowledge, and how sources of knowledge influence the work of educators in the classroom.

Teacher education is also about understanding teacher preparation policy and reform proposals in the context of larger political agendas, ideologies and debates. While teachers cannot substitute for social movements aimed at the transformation of society, their work is integral to societal change and development. This means recognizing that teaching is already a politicised entity, whereby educators are called to be a part of a community that adopts a political consciousness, with a commitment to diminishing inequities in society.

Specific issues and complexities in combating racism in Canadian schools have been

addressed by George Sefa Dei in his numerous works and I shall concentrate in showing the trajectory of thought and his proposals, some of which influenced the Ministry of Education policies on inclusive education. In *Racists Beware: Uncovering Racial Politics in Contemporary Society* (2008), Dei agrees with Cochran-Smith on the pervasive influence of politics and ideology in educational policy and programming. Dei wishes to shatter the notion of schools as an apolitical entity, whereby all youth have the equal opportunity to succeed. He moves away from the one-size fits all approach to education, where failure is blamed on individual inadequacies, rather than considering social and structural disadvantages. He places salience on social policies and institutional practices, and on the individual workings of social relationships. This book draws the road map for anti-racist theory and practice in Canadian schools, relying on the larger body of critical literature on race and equity education. The learning objective is to illuminate the complex nature of theory, politics, community advocacy, as well as intellectual activism to do with race and difference. Dei calls for a consciousness on the lingering disparities produced from colonization, that is, denying resources to certain groups while privileging others. Among some of the conclusions, Dei upholds that good education is embedded in anti-racist practice. It is imperative to engage the tough questions of power, privilege, responsibility, accountability and the commitment to fight for social justice. Anti-racist education requires critically reflecting on the experience of students and the wider community in understanding the complexity of oppression and social conditions; it requires critical cultural hermeneutics. This leads to new pedagogical approaches for engaging students with different identities, including race, gender, sexuality, disability, and language. The success of anti-racist educational pedagogy will rest on how fairly power and resources are distributed in various institutions. Being proactive requires the use of concrete actions to bring about systemic change. It is important to focus on accountability and responsibility, against bland talk of inclusion without cognate inclusive praxis.

In *Removing the Margins* Dei et al. (2000) continue to focus on anti-racist theory.

However, Dei et al. provide a more focused discussion within the context of the educational system. Dei et al. (2002) provide a philosophical and theoretical framework for inclusivity, while also offering a practical guide in the corresponding teachers' manual, titled *Inclusive Schooling, A Teacher's Companion to Removing the Margins*. Dei et al. adopt the notion of diversity as a critical perspective, which views schools as a racially, culturally, and politically mediated reality. This involves understanding power relations to interpret forms of discrimination. Educational practices based on this critical perspective emphasise identity, equity, and representation as fundamental to schooling. The emphasis of this paradigm is to further develop anti-racism education by proposing the necessity of multiple centres of knowledge (indigenous knowledge, spiritual knowledge, community knowledge). Centres of knowledge encompass the content, the location of where the knowledge is derived, and the position the knowledge takes. Upholding various centres of knowledge can help reduce marginalisation and exclusion in schools. Specifically, it works to deconstruct the Eurocentric approach to education, so that teaching methods that are culturally and socially relevant can be incorporated into various facets of the educational system.

Dei et al. propose that centres of knowledge are transmitted through language and representation that can either be shared or subordinated. Language and knowledge representation are the tools needed in order to critically examine and evaluate the effectiveness of the centres of knowledge addressed in a school setting. Among some of these conclusions proposed, it was found that an increase in the linguistic and ethno-cultural diversity allows for the expression of a variety of languages. Knowledge representation is learning about the different experiences and histories, which can be fostered in the wide range of resources offered to students. Visual representation, the students' ability to see themselves represented in the school, can also take expression in the cultural background of teaching staff.

Dei et al.'s practical teacher manual is based on integrating centres of knowledge by upholding four learning objectives: 'educational change through equity, access and

social justice, the recognition and respect for differences, and teaching for youth and community empowerment.' Ultimately, Dei et al. provide these categories to prompt self-reflection and to draw attention to the various avenues through which inclusive education can be promoted.

While Dei et al. look at power relations in the educational system, Walter Stephan's (1999) *Reducing Prejudice and Stereotyping* attempts to elucidate the nature of prejudice and stereotyping through his synthesis of existing research. His presentation on the causes of prejudice and stereotyping is used as a tool to suggest remedies within the education system. Stephan proposes that the school system is a microcosm for the structural relations of larger society, therefore successfully modifying relations in the school, will contribute to changing the structural relations between groups on a macro level. The literature suggests that stereotypes are frequently negative, over-generalised and incorrect. When an individual makes categorisations, he or she tends to exaggerate and overemphasise the differences between out-groups and in-groups, and overemphasise the similarities between out-group members to one another. That is, people who possess the same social identification markers as the person judging the situation are often perceived as individuals.

In contrast, out-groups are often understood in terms of stereotypes. Secondly, Stephan proposes that there are newer, covert forms of prejudice. Understanding these seven types of prejudice (symbolic racism, aversive racism, ambivalence-amplification, compunction theory, social dominance, and integrated threat theory) can help one to reach a workable solution in future practice. By acknowledging the diversity in the nature of prejudice, it can help educators to more accurately identify the issue, and thus find the most corrective course of action.

Stephan applies this conception of prejudice and stereotypes to offer optimal contact conditions for intergroup relations in a school setting. He claims that programs can

teach students about the workings of social categories. This has been deemed effective because relations between groups are more likely to be resolved if students are educated about the source of conflict. As well, individualising or personalising members of out-groups improves relations, and allows one to judge based on the merits of his or her actions (rather than stereotypes). Intergroup contact through cooperative extracurricular activities can help to foster positive associations between intergroup relations. Furthermore, it is imperative for positive relations to be modeled by the staff and reflected in school culture as a whole, which often comes from effective teacher-training programs.

Two books which were published before Egbo's pioneering work, *Teaching for Diversity in Canadian Schools* (2009), present a more specific analysis of the challenges of diversity and multicultural education in Canada in general, and in Ontario in particular, from the perspective of sociology of education. It also develops the interpretative theoretical framework adapted for this thesis with specific focus on Canadian education. Terry Wotherspoon's third edition of *The Sociology of Education in Canada* (2009) is very magisterial and diverse in range. Wotherspoon develops his book in nine chapters. In chapters one and two he explores the foundations of the sociological understanding of education and the nature and perspectives of a sociological inquiry on education. He argues that "recent studies on the impact that schooling had on social inequality across generations have led to the production of rich data and advanced statistical techniques into social science research in North America, Europe and other parts of the world" (2009: 232). It has also led to evidence-based research in education studies using innovative qualitative approaches and the emergence of models of research in sociology of education.

In Canada particularly, this development led to the establishment of the Canadian Council on Learning in 2004. This government-sponsored agency has provided new opportunities "for researchers, policy-makers, and other partners to co- ordinate

research-related activities focused on key dimensions of education and lifelong learning”(2009: 182). He shows the importance of data collection in research on the sociology of learning. He underlines the importance of drawing upon data collected from secondary sources, while encouraging refining and updating the data through new research instruments (survey, interviews, focus groups, documentary analysis, narrative accounts, observation, etc.). In Canada, research in sociology of education has developed into four main areas: “critical pedagogy motivated by the desire to integrate educational theory and educational practice; feminist pedagogy which challenges the common view that education is neutral and commits itself to transform the education system by taking into account the differential experiences, life changes, and ways of knowing that prevails for men and women in society; anti-racism education which emphasises the powerful social impact of inequalities and ideologies based on race; and political economy which stresses the inter-relationships that prevail among the various segments of society, including the economic, political, and social realms” (2009:15-16).

These four dimensions are germane, in my thinking, for any objective and balanced research in the sociology of education in Canada and are helpful distinction for my study even though Wotherspoon fails to integrate a fifth category. This is emerging since the June 2005 legalisation of same-sex marriage in Canada, that is, the aspect of educational policy for the formation of students with same-sex orientation.

Wotherspoon explores the various sociological theories of education and relates them to the historical dimension of Canadian education. His work offers an important framework for understanding the historical, theoretical, conceptual and socio-cultural dimensions of any research in the sociology of education in Canada. The challenges and opportunities of diversity and multiculturalism in the separate school boards can only be better appreciated within the wider canvas of the sociology of education in Canada. That means that one needs to understand that educational changes do not stand on their own. They are a part of a broad

reshaping of social, economic, and political landscapes affected by the character of the nation and individuals. These domains and the world they are part of have become simultaneously more specialised and more highly inter-connected.

This work also systematically analyses the challenges of social reproduction in Canada especially exploring the historical, socio-cultural, educational and political dimensions of social inequality in Canada. He addresses the problems specific to our research by showing the strengths and limitations of educational and political policies which have been attempted in the past for addressing social reproduction in Canada with regard to visible minorities (migrants, First Nations, Aboriginals, females, Blacks, students with disabilities and students with homosexual orientation and alternate life styles). His cultural analysis of poverty and economic disadvantages faced by minorities and the pathway for reform of the educational systems and the structural and institutional reconfiguration needed to expand the field of educational opportunities and promote equity education are helpful for my research. Like Egbo, this work does not address the challenges of educational reform in faith-based schools but gives a valid and coherent alternative which could be refined and appropriated in a faith-based setting.

The other work in the same vein which shows the beginnings of research in the sociology of education in Canada is the rich volume with thirty one contributors, *Multiculturalism in Canada: Social and Educational Perspectives* (1984). The essays in this book address various trends, issues, perspectives, strategies, and programs relating to multiculturalism in education so as to present a comprehensive guide for teachers and professionals. The essays are historical, theoretical and practical, showing the pathways in sociology of education needed in Canada since 1971 when multiculturalism became an official policy of the federal government. The authors from different perspectives offer some insights and develop some new strategies needed to meet the challenges and implications of cultural diversity in schools. The book also addressed the need to emphasize the whole of area of study in sociology

of education and to increase awareness of both diversity in Canadian society and its representations in the educational curriculum and methods employed in the schools.

This book is significant because it is the first attempt in English-speaking Canada to do a phenomenological study, using multi-disciplinary approaches, of the multicultural ideals of Canadian society. It shows that the first concern of multiculturalism was how to maintain the cultural and linguistic identities of the two major cultural blocs in Canada: English and French Canadians. However, this concern soon became a national drive to inclusivity not only in language but to immigrants, First Nations, and other cultural subjects and races. The desire for inclusion became at the same time a need to breakdown discriminatory practices against minorities based on sex, gender, religion, sexuality, and race. The other significant aspect of this book involves the various strategies for diversity education in Part Four where a conscious attempt is made to introduce the notion of intercultural education, the reform of the curriculum, the recognition of multiple intelligence, and the needed openness for border-crossings in the schools. This work is a great resource for understanding the historical context of multiculturalism as a concept in Canada, and the conflicts and tensions it generated in the first two decades of its implementation as an educational reform movement in Canadian schools.

Some Catholic social scientists, educationists and social scientists have engaged in this dialogue. There have been some commentaries and research on specific aspects of Catholic education in conversation with public educational policy, the most recent work being McDonough (2012). Two major voices in this regard until recently are James Mulligan and Dennis Murphy, who concentrate on showing the internal challenges facing Catholic education without specifically addressing the question of diversity and multicultural education. Writing in *Catholic Education: The Future is now* (1999), Mulligan discusses the fragility and possible demise of the publicly-funded Catholic education system in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario.

Mulligan provides a descriptive and critical picture of different approaches to Catholic education in the three provinces in Canada with publicly-funded Catholic education, while showing the limitations in the system which could lead to its possible demise. His second edition of the book, *Catholic Education: Ensuring a Future* (Mulligan, 2006), also serves the same goal. Both editions uphold what Mulligan describes as an 'eavesdropping' approach on conversations with teachers, parents, and administrators of the separate school board to bring to light the challenges and opportunities for Catholic Education.

However, the second edition differs mainly in Mulligan's analysis of the current cultural context. In his updated version, the realistic picture for Mulligan situates Catholic education in a post-Christian culture, which is threatened by the mass media, globalisation, and neo-conservatism. He wishes to portray the tension between cultural trends and the authenticity of the Catholic school system.

However, alongside these external cultural factors, Mulligan draws attention to the decline in participation, practice, and identification of Catholics. His focus on topics such as the Catholic vision, leadership, and faith formation highlights areas of the system that are in need of repair. The combination of both these external and internal factors leaves the publicly-funded Catholic education system in great danger of being lost. In order for the separate school system to be renewed, Mulligan believes that the vision and aims of Catholic education need to be appropriated by all educators. This vision is inclusive of a set of beliefs rooted in the Gospel, which should be infused into every subject area. The loss of the 'bias' of Catholic education coincides with Casson's finding of a fragmented Catholic identity in faith-based schools.

Dennis Murphy's *Catholic Education: A light of Truth* (2007) covers an array of interconnected topics in regards to Catholic education. His aim is to search for the truth of Catholic education in today's world by exploring the rich tradition of the faith, examining modern challenges, focusing on the role of the Catholic educator,

discussing the salience of the Christian community in a child's education and providing suggestions in regards to leadership. His book is a compilation of articles which he published in a Canadian newspaper, *The Catholic Register*. Murphy's conclusions suggest that the primary educational objective of the Catholic school is to assist students to discover the truth of life, self and God, which is ultimately found in the message of Jesus Christ. He maintains that this distinctive and intentionally-created learning environment creates a true uniqueness in Catholic education. The Christian community plays a fundamental role in the search for the truth of the human person and its Creator. However, Murphy maintains that there are numerous imperfections that are in need of fixing. He does not wish to place the onus on governmental agencies or attribute the lack of funding as the primary cause for the qualms encountered in the separate school system.

Instead, Murphy emphasises that many challenges emerge due to religious amnesia: a failure to remember the rich tradition of the faith. Furthermore, the prevalence of religious illiteracy continues to create barriers to accessing the essential stories and teachings. These problems stem from a shifting cultural climate, which he labels as aggressive secularism. Like Mulligan, Murphy places much emphasis on teachers using the language of the Gospel and to be witnesses of the faith in order to continue to nurture a distinctively Christian learning community, through a partnership with family and the Church. Murphy asserts that despite individualism and the disjointedness that marks Western society, we are coming to scientific understandings of how all of life is interrelated. He proposes that faith communities should embrace this understanding to further deliver the Christian message.

While *Catholic Education: Transforming our World* (Institute for Catholic Education, 1991) covers similar topics to the proceeding works, it is slightly different with its focus on faith and justice in a Canadian context. This book was issued by the Institute for Catholic Education, which encompass a series of essays presented by speakers in the 1990 National Catholic Education Association in Toronto. The book

explores four important categories, which include the changing cultural context, the role of the educators in the separate school system, the shaping of curriculum, and the challenges that are faced within the religious education system. The book situates Catholic schools in Canada in a post-modern culture facing the pangs of secularization. It also recognises the post-Vatican II church, which has brought social justice to the forefront of the Catholic mission, especially with its emphasis on the dignity of the human person. It also draws attention to the changing demographics of Canadian society, which calls for the betterment of education in terms informing students about the beauty in other cultures and religions, (echoing the concern found in Casson's study on faith-based schools in England). This book also focuses on the centrality of teachers in the life of young children's understanding of self and the world in relation to Jesus. Parents are identified as the first teachers of the faith for their children, and must continue to guide and support them throughout various stages of development. Not only *who* teaches, but also *what* is taught is a foundational principle of Catholic education. An awareness and sensitivity to the explicit, implicit and null curriculum can improve our understanding of how children learn, and subsequently improve teaching practices. Thus, this book, along with the others in this review put emphasis on the staff as integral for maintaining the Catholic identity of school in a shifting cultural landscape.

Thus, this body of literature seems to highlight the importance of adaptive change in order to combat the injustices found within the education system. This involves looking beyond the temporary and technical fixes, but rather adopting a worldview that advocates for social reform based on the notions of equity and justice. Catholic education in Ontario, as it was initially conceived and structured, was designed to look at the needs of Catholic children from a Catholic background, and destined for a Catholic environment. Today, Catholic educators and parents can no longer guarantee that students will dwell within a Catholic-centric milieu and that is not something bad or to be overlooked. The reality is that in Canada, Ontario, and particularly in Toronto, students and children live in a multi-faceted environment

(Ujimoto, 1991: 133). Multiple cultures, faiths, races and creeds make up society. In addition, families have gained a certain level of social, economic and professional mobility, affording new living and working accommodations in almost any corner of the globe. As Dechert explains (1999, 259): “We have witnessed a revolution in human affairs, a ‘change of phase’ inaugurating a global community unprecedented in numbers and extent, literally encompassing all men [*sic*] and the earth’s entire face.” McLuhan’s “global village” has most certainly come to pass. “The world as we once knew it has changed beyond recognition, as have the expectations of education” (Wotherspoon, 1991: 448). In turn, this requires that perceptions and practices of Catholic education, organized religion and the Church, change so as to overcome the challenges of today’s milieu and to meet the needs of the faithful. “We must [then] know where our students are and where we want them to be” in relation to this ever-evolving reality.” This is of utmost importance in light of the “present cultural context within which Catholic education takes place” (Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1989: 14).

In Catholic schools, Catholic social teaching is a central component of the faith formation of students. “Traditional civic values such as justice, freedom, the nobility of labour and the need to pursue social progress, are found among Catholic school goals” (CCSTA, 2005: 33-39). Students are taught to reach out and build relationships of love and justice through service to others. Catholic educators also make students aware of structural injustice, oppression, exploitation and systemic evil that exist in our world (CCSTA, 2005: 33-39). They provide students with the ability to determine the degree of justice present in any given situation by looking at the weakest, most powerless and poorest members of society. These principles are promoted not merely for the sake of educating students, but primarily so they become proactive global citizens (CCE, 1988: 46). In teaching social justice principles within the Catholic system, students will become more justice-oriented and passionate about the rights of others, looking for ways to address injustices, inequalities and equity-based issues well into the future. Imparting the biblical wisdom of social justice and care for others constitutes an encouraging and

positive element for human awareness and the continuation of the Roman Catholic faith. However, Catholics and Catholic educators should not be too self-assured. Otherwise, they will lose sight of the fact that this work needs not only to be done, but also maintained and encouraged on an ongoing basis, since any form of Catholic education or Catholic curriculum that does not include Catholic social teachings is not fully Catholic. The fundamental question is how these lofty ideals are translated into educational policy documents in the Catholic schools in Ontario in conversation with the guidelines from the Ministry of Education.

2.6 Reviewing the Equity and Diversity Strategy (CEIE) of the Separate School system in Ontario in conversation with the Strategic Framework (EIE) of Ontario's Ministry of Education

The major document issued by Ontario's Ministry of Education on diversity and multiculturalism is *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* (2009). The document builds on the planks of the 2008 document, *Reach Every Student: Energizing Ontario Education* which had three main objectives, namely: bringing about high levels of student achievement, creating a school culture which will help reduce the gaps in student achievement and increasing public confidence in publicly-funded education. It also drew from the 2008 UNESCO policy framework, *Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future* which espoused the principle that:

An equitable, inclusive education system is critical to delivering a high-quality education to all learners and that school reforms are required in all countries in the world which supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners" (2009: 5). The Ministry, therefore, proposes that in an increasingly diverse Ontario all publicly- funded schools and indeed all schools must make sure that students are "engaged, included, and respected, and that they see themselves reflected in their learning environment" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009: 5). The Ministry of Education (2009: 11) in this

document argues rather persuasively:

We believe that Ontario's diversity can be one of its greatest assets. To realize the promise of diversity, we must ensure that we respect and value the full range of our differences. Equitable, inclusive education is also central to creating a cohesive society and a strong economy that will secure Ontario's future prosperity.

In *Realizing the Promise of Equity*, the Ministry of Education further proposes that multicultural education is truly an equitable system because it makes sure that gender, religion, race, or socio-economic factors do not prevent students from achieving their ultimate best in the educational process. This means that all barriers towards educational attainment can be removed when all educational partners create conditions needed for success. Multicultural and inclusive education is presented as central to the achievement of high-quality education for all students in Ontario schools and critical for the attainment of equitable and inclusive Canadian society. This highlights the foundation and motivation for the development of the equity and inclusivity strategy by the Ontario government.

As at the time of setting forth this policy, the Ministry of Education reported that only 43 out of the 72 school boards in Ontario report that they currently have some form of equity policy in place (Ministry of Education, 2009: 9), but only three school boards have a comprehensive plan apart from a page or two of statements of general principles. It is in the light of this that this document sets clearly not only a framework but goals to be attained. The aim of all policy documents for all school boards according to the ministry is: "to promote inclusive education, as well as to understand, identify, and eliminate biases, barriers, and power dynamics that limit our students' prospects of learning, growing, and fully contributing to society" (Ministry of Education, 2009: 11). The barriers identified in this document include the following dimensions of diversity or their intersection: ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical ability, intellectual ability, race,

religion, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, etc. In addition, all board educational policy on equity 'must reaffirm the values of fairness, equity, and respect as essential principles in all publicly-funded schools.' The Ministry then sets forth in this document three important benchmarks for equity and inclusive education which should be implemented by all publicly-funded schools boards: (i) shared and committed leadership by the ministry, boards, and school will play a critical role in eliminating discrimination through the identification and removal of bias and barriers; (ii) equity and inclusive education policies and practices will support positive learning environments so that all students can feel engaged in and empowered by what they are learning, supported by the teachers and staff from whom they are learning, and welcome in an environment in which they are learning; (iii) accountability and transparency will be demonstrated through the use of clear measures of success (based on established indicators) and through communication to the public of progress towards achieving equity for students (Ministry of Education, 2009: 11-14).

This policy document has been updated by three policy guidelines especially issued following the September 1, 2012, Bill 13, the *Accepting Schools Act*, which amended the Education Act and which sets out the expectations for all school boards, "to provide safe, inclusive, and accepting learning environments in which every student can succeed." These policies include: Policy/Program Memorandum No. 145, *Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behavior* (December 5, 2012), which requires that all publicly-funded school boards must align their policy and programs on equity and inclusiveness with relevant ministry strategies and initiatives. It also included the protocol for *Safe School Incident Reporting*. The other significant policy guidelines are *Promoting A Positive School Climate: A Resource for Schools* (2011) and the April 22, 2013, Policy/Program Memorandum No. 19, *Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools*. This document clearly states that:

All publicly funded school boards are required to develop, implement,

and monitor an equity and inclusive education policy that includes a religious accommodation guideline, in accordance with the requirements set out in this memorandum and the strategy, and that complies with relevant legislation including amendments to the Education Act (Ministry of Education, 2013: 3).

There is no single document which governs diversity and multiculturalism in the separate schools in Canada. Most of the Catholic separate school boards have relied on the social teaching of the Catholic church, a fairly long but defined set of principles which govern issues like human rights, human dignity, solidarity, charity, subsidiarity, ecological ethics, and social ethics. These principles usually draw from biblical and historical sources, as well as papal documents, bishops' statements, and the writings of theologians, anthropologists, ethicists, and social scientists. The summary of the foundation for the policy is the statement of the Assembly of the Catholic Bishops of Ontario on January 14, 2011 which states in part: "We proclaim that every individual young or old is to be treated with reverence and that we are to see the face of Christ in every person."

Most Catholic schools also draw from two other public documents in the formulation of their policy on diversity and multiculturalism, namely: the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Constitutional Act of 1867*, confirmed in the *Constitutional Act of 1982-the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The Catholic separate school boards' policies are not only guided by church teachings but also by the Ontario Ministry of Education's document, *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* (2009). However, the challenges of coming up with a policy have proven so difficult for Catholic separate schools and have also affected the curriculum, school culture, as well as their ability to reduce prejudice, stereotyping, and bullying. The Institute for Catholic Education in Toronto has also issued a document to help school leaders in meeting the challenges of diversity and multiculturalism, *Putting Ontario's Leadership Framework into Action: A Guide for*

School and System Leaders (2011) which are sets of principles and practices for effective school leadership amidst the past-paced social changes of the present times. The Catholic school board which is the focus of our study has a policy which was put in place in 2011, *Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education Policy* H. M. 24, which contains ten regulations which will govern how to create a healthy and equitable school community based on this fundamental principle: "The Toronto Catholic District School Board recognises that all people are deserving of dignity and are created equal in the image of God, each with inimitable characteristics (Genesis 1: 27). In accordance with the Catholic faith and the Church's moral teachings as found in the Catechism and other teachings of the Magisterium, the Board provides an educational environment that supports and embraces diversity within the Catholic community, demonstrates respect for all, and values each as a child of God"(TDCSB, Mission statement).

In order to meet this challenge, and also address some of the inadequacies in the documents on education used in formulating the strategy on diversity and multiculturalism in the Catholic schools, the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops in collaboration with some experts from the Institute for Catholic Education in Toronto and some experts in Catholic education published the *Pastoral Guidelines to Assist Students of Same-Sex Orientation* (hereafter *Pastoral Guidelines*). This is a comprehensive document which serves as the template around which the curriculum on human rights, diversity, and multiculturalism is formulated in Catholic schools in Ontario. This document builds on and updates the previous documents on family life, morality, and religious education published previously by the conference as well as the Vatican documents especially *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons* (2003), and the documents from the Congregation for Catholic Education, *Instruction Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with Regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in View of their Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders* (2005). These previous documents are: (1) *Guidelines for Family Life Education* (1987); (2) *Letter of the Ontario Bishops on Religious Education at the High School Level* (1979). The document also

draws from the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops' document, *Human Sexuality: A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning* (1991), and the document by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, *In Search of the Good: A Catholic Understanding of Moral Living* (2004).

I shall proceed to summarize the main points of this *Pastoral Guidelines* with regard to the education of students in high school on same-sex and diversity education. *Pastoral Guidelines* has seven chapters but the chapters that concern us are six and seven, where the document addresses the issues of human rights, sexual orientation, and the goal of the Catholic educational enterprise. The aim of *Pastoral Guidelines* is to present the Church's teaching on homosexuality, marriage and the right to it with a view to showing that greater integration through chaste living within and outside marriage, is possible and the best way of upholding the dignity of the human person, building a better community, and upholding a Catholic education (*Pastoral Guidelines*, 2004: 1). The document goes ahead to argue that "an irreversible homosexual orientation is not sinful, since it is not sought by homosexual persons. A tendency, desire or inclination are not choices and are therefore not wrong in themselves. There is a real difference between sexual desire and the decision to act on it. The Church makes a critical distinction between orientation, and conduct or behavior. The church clearly teaches that homosexual acts are immoral." (*Pastoral Guidelines*, 2004: 4). The document emphasises that the curriculum and the school environment should be such that the right of every student to self-identity and the recognition of their self-worth should be respected (*Pastoral Guidelines*, 2004: 6).

This *Pastoral Guidelines*, the best curriculum resource on diversity and multiculturalism for Catholic schools, proposes further: "Catholic schools provide educational opportunity within the context of a faith community which must clearly be seen to recognise that each individual is made in the image and likeness of God, to affirm the essential dignity, value and rights of the human person, and to model the Gospel values of faith, hope, and love to each and every student entrusted to their care" (*Pastoral Guidelines*, 2004: 9).

The *Pastoral Guidelines* specifies some of the fundamental principles to be followed in teaching diversity in Catholic schools: (1) "Every student no matter their color or sexual orientation has an inherent dignity because he or she is created in God's image and likeness. A deep respect for the total person should lead to compassion and support for all those who are struggling with their sexuality." (2) The gift of one's sexual orientation is based on human freedom and power and we can channel it towards good and evil. The curriculum must, therefore, emphasise how the students can respect their own dignity and that of others by the kind of choices they make in choosing the path of chastity. (3) "Respect for the God-given dignity of all persons means the recognition of human rights and responsibilities. In that regard, the fundamental human rights of all people including persons with homosexual orientation must be defended against any forms of discrimination, injustice, oppression, prejudice, bullying in school or violence of any kind." The human rights of homosexual persons do not include marriage or sexual acts which are considered immoral in the teaching of the Church.

The position of the church on pastoral care for homosexual students in Catholic high schools, and the teaching on human rights as fundamental to all persons, but excluding the right of homosexual persons to marry did not receive the approval of the whole Catholic community, even by some parents and teachers. These teachers and parents formed the Ontario Catholic Family Life Educators Network and published a document, *Homosexuality and the Catholic High School* (2001), where it raises some objections to the teachings on human rights as it affects homosexual students and what it perceives as myopic education and negative environment in Catholic schools for homosexual persons. The aim of this document, the authors claim, is to draw attention to the need to recognise the rights of homosexual persons, the recognition of their dignity and value as a foundational principle of the social justice teaching of the Catholic Church (OCFLEN, 2001: 1).

Some of the proposals which the authors of the document raise include: (1) LGBTQ Catholic students, their families and those who love them should be treated with the

dignity and respect as God's people. (2) Sexual orientation is not a learned behavior and is formed very early in the life of a child and is not under the control of the person and cannot be altered. Conversion therapy, according to scientific research does not work and can actually be harmful to homosexual persons in most cases. (3) Protecting the rights of the homosexual student will entail developing an all-inclusive teaching and learning environment. The curriculum should teach the students not only the position of the church but the constitutional provision on the rights of same-sex persons so that the students will have the multicultural knowledge offered and required in a multi-cultural climate in Canada. One sees from the foregoing that even within the stakeholders—teachers, administrators, bishops, parents, and priests—there is no consensus on what the curriculum on human rights should be in the light of the confusing situation brought about in Canada by the legalization of same-sex 'marriage.'

The recent document, *Religious Education* (2012), a profile produced for the Catholic separate boards, has a sub-section on 'Equity and Inclusive Education in Religious Education' which is an attempt to address the inadequacies in the *Pastoral Guidelines* especially with regard to clarity about the concepts of equity, diversity, and multiculturalism. The document states:

A school climate based on the principles of equity and inclusivity is one where all members of the school community feel safe, welcomes and accepted, regardless of ancestry , culture, ethnicity, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or socio-economic statues. Students see themselves reflected in the curriculum, in a physical environment which honors diversity and respect the dignity of individuals (Institute of Catholic Education, 2012: 59).

2.7 Conclusion

What is evident from this review is that the interrogative theoretical framework with

its conflictual and critical approaches is supported by the literature reviewed, which reflects normativity in terms of how Catholic education is framed. Furthermore, it shows that in the vast range of literature on Catholic education in Canada there is an inherent tension about how Catholic education is framed in Catholic board strategies, in the writings of theorists in the areas and in the practices of teachers and administrators on the frontline. It is obvious then that the Catholic separate school boards are at a very complex and challenging juncture in terms of maintaining their own unique faith-based perspective on diversity and multiculturalism as well as being faithful to the requirements of the Ontario Ministry of Education's equity and inclusive education strategy for all publicly-funded schools. The resources for meeting these challenges are limited for the separate school board because they are based on church documents which are metaphysical in nature without strong social analysis and empirical referents. The challenge will be to understand the strengths and limitations of these documents, and how to expand or modify them to offer solid foundation for diversity and multicultural education which is capable of achieving five key goals: content integration, knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction, an empowering school culture, and creating a community of the beloved. This will require harvesting the data through the perspectives of the educational administrators with regard to how they perceive these challenges and the new vistas of opportunities which they open for meeting the diverse need and situations of all children who seek integral education through the separate education system.

Chapter Three

Research methodology and design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research method used in the study of the challenges and opportunities of implementing the diversity and multicultural education strategy of the Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education (CEIE) at the Community of the Beloved High School. The chapter discusses the research design, study population, respondents, semi-structured focus discussion groups and method of data collection. The chapter also presents the structure for the analysis of the data collected and how they will be presented.

3.2 Research Methodology

Newby (2010) makes a distinction between research methodology and research method which is important in clarifying the methodological standpoint of this research and the critical social theory which grounds its philosophical foundations. According to Newby, (2010:51):

Research methodology is concerned with the assembly of research tools and the application of appropriate results. Research methods are the research tools themselves, for example questionnaires, observation, statistical analysis. At its simplest, for the practical researcher, methodology is how the tool kit of research methods is brought together to crack an individual and specific research problem.

Research method, on the other hand, in Newby's perspective is concerned with how we go about harvesting the data and how we analyze them.

Sowell's (2001:21-24) identification of four methods in educational research seems to me a valid distinction useful in categorising the pathway which I have followed in carrying out this research in sociology of education. Firstly, is the descriptive method which she argues requires 'careful collection, analysis, and interpretation of mainly quantitative data which are measurable' in order to show the status of knowledge about specific variables or to describe the degrees of relationship between them (2001:21-24).

These kinds of studies or research serve the goals of explanation, prediction and control. Secondly are the experimental methods which require "careful collection, analysis, and interpretation of quantitative data in order to discover causal relationships between phenomena by intervening in the natural setting and controlling all the relevant variables" (2001:24). Experimental methods are used in research projects in which control is the goal. Unlike qualitative methods which are inductive, experimental approaches are deductive and involve the testing of hypothesis and various sampling techniques. Researchers who use this approach argue that the strength of this method is that the results are replicable in multiple settings under similar conditions if the variables are the same. This has led to the claims that experimental methods lead to the development of general propositions or theories about educational activities. Thirdly, for Sowell, are the qualitative methods which constitute the approach of this research. Qualitative method refers to "an array of strategies used by researchers to gather mostly verbal data in natural settings, usually over a relatively long time period. Researchers gather data during recurring cycles of collection, analysis and interpretation which provide them with holistic perspectives about the phenomenon under investigation" (2001:24). Creswell (2013: 16) defines qualitative educational research as:

Best suited to address a research problem in which you do not know the variables and need to explore. The literature might yield little information about the phenomenon of study, and you need to learn more from participants through exploration.

The fourth approach, according to Sowell, is the historical or narrative methods which are typically used to investigate a phenomenon that occurred in the past. Researchers gather data from whichever sources can be located, including archives, libraries, personal testimonies, minutes of meetings, and others. Once the sources have been authenticated and credibility established for the sources and content, researchers prepare a narrative detailing their analysis (Sowell, 2001:20-23). There is also the mixed method which brings together quantitative and qualitative research approaches. It includes the use of survey methods, experimental approaches, ethnography and case studies. Mixed methods particularly use triangulation not simply to validate results and measurements with precision, but also to enhance the correctness of insight and the legitimacy of interpretations (Newby, 2010:28).

It is important to highlight the different approaches because each method offers a framework for research which is aligned to the theoretical framework of a particular research undertaking. It also orders the nature of the data to be sought, the instruments to be used for data collection and the approach to analyzing the findings. I wish to show the diversity of methodological approaches for doing social scientific research in sociology of education and why I have chosen the qualitative method as the approach which fits into the theoretical framework of this research and which uses the dual interrogative approach of critical and conflictual theories of school culture.

Firstly, is that the central phenomenon of the research—equity and diversity education—which is often identified within the larger typology of multicultural education requires the observation and participation in a community where it can be fully understood. However, understanding how equity and diversity play out in the school culture presupposes (as I have indicated in Chapter Two) an assumption that school culture is not normative because in the diversity and cultural pluralism of today's Canada, schools are 'fields of tensions' of multiple cultures and values. Secondly, the data collected from the community requires the application of different

qualitative tools for harvesting the stories as well as for analyzing the data. As Sowell (2001:22) recommends, this method is best suited for identifying challenges and conditions for academic success especially for under-achieving students. Sowell (2001:22) argues further:

The nature of this problem requires that researchers seek information through interactions with students, teachers, and other school and community personnel. Study and analysis of these data are expected to show linkages among the people and their circumstances that distinguish more favorable classroom conditions from less favorable conditions.

Scott (2003:52) observes that it is important in choosing one's research method to understand the philosophies, conceptual and theoretical framework, strengths and weaknesses of each approach. One can identify two main philosophical frameworks to educational research, the positivistic approach which proposes that theory building in educational research is nomological in character and value-free. As a result, time and context-free generalizations are possible based as it is on the hypothetico-deductive method. The other approach, for Scott, is the naturalistic approach, where data are obtained in a natural setting while minimizing, as Newby observes, the influence of an unrealistic research environment (Newby, 2010:117). It is a hermeneutic/interpretative approach which asserts that educational settings cannot be understood without examining the social context and interactions of people and how participants give meanings to them in their activities. Scott (2003:52) argues as follows:

Whereas those educational researchers who would place themselves within the positivist camp pay little attention to political, ethical and reflexive concerns, those who would locate themselves within the hermeneutic/interpretative camp argue that the research enterprise is empty without explicit reference being made to these issues.

In the following table I will show the differences between the Naturalistic and

positivistic approach to educational research according to Scott. I will also present the different proposed tools for conducting educational research using any of these two approaches.

Table 3. 1: Distinction Between Positivistic and Naturalistic Approaches to Educational Research (Scott, 2005:75-81)

<i>Positivistic Approach</i>	<i>Naturalistic Approach</i>
Validity	Descriptive Vividness
Deductive Approach	Methodological Congruence
Internal and External Reliability	Inductive Approach
Hypothesis Testing	Analytical Preciseness
Statistical Inferences	Theoretical Connections
Independent and Dependent Variables	Social Constructivist Through Critical Social Theory
Variable Control/Generalizability	Heuristic
Tools	Tools
Surveys, questionnaires	Interviews, focus groups, observation
Objective Assessment and Identification	Data are Subjective and Objective
Measure the Dependent Variable	Data are Collected and Not Measured
Convert to numerical Symbols and apply statistical inferences to Numbers	Themes or clusters are identified and data are sorted in a theme analysis
Large sample sizes help with confidence levels; statistical significance for pre-post treatment	The themes are supported by participants or experts
Statistical Correlations and relationships identified	The exploration and description of a phenomenon; identification of linkages, relationships, or interpretations
Probability of errors and confidence Identified	Probability of errors not significant to the conclusion
Causal Relationships	Results are themes, clusters of ideas, narratives or theory constructs

In the light of the following, there are three elements of research methodology which are being employed in this research. The first is a qualitative design which is the research framework for this study. The second one is the naturalistic approach

as against positivist empiricism which concentrates on the natural environment or the school culture of the participants in this research. The third one is a narrative approach in harvesting the stories of the participants from the field. Indeed, the use of a narrative method rather than a narrative design as a tool for harvesting data in qualitative research has become common in educational research. Creswell (2013: 21-22, 503-507) and Gomm (2009:209-210) see a narrative method rather than a narrative design as a needed tool in ethnographic research where the social and personal experiences of individuals are being researched. It is also employed in critical ethnography which has an emancipatory goal of shedding light on the context and experiences of those on the margins. Since issues of equity and diversity in multicultural faith-education are the central phenomenon of this research, and since there is considerable unease among teachers in faith-based settings about how to implement a strategy in the school for realizing the goal of the board, listening to their stories demanded that I develop a narrative structural approach especially for the personal interviews.

3.3 Research design

According to DeForge (2010:1253-1254):

Research design is the plan that provides the logical structure that guides the investigator to address research problems and answer research questions. It is one of the most important components of research methodology. Research methodology not only details the type of research design to be implemented but includes the approach to measuring variables and collecting data from participants, devising a strategy to sample participants (units) to be studied, and planning how the data will be analyzed.

A research design also provides a framework within which the research is to be conducted from the beginning or initiating of the project to conclusion of the work.

In many cases, depending on the nature of the project, research design also includes the process from developing the initial hypothesis which guides the research from the process of data collection to analysis (Kothari 1990: 39). This research used a qualitative research design which is described in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2 Qualitative Approach in Educational Research on Equity and Diversity Education

Educational Research Task	Qualitative Approach
Embracing Diversity and Multicultural Education by concentrating on board programs and practices and their implementation in Community of the Beloved Catholic High School, Scarborough.	I used two instruments (a) individual face-to-face interviews of 53 teachers; and (b) three focus group discussions of: (i) Community of the Beloved School Council and Community of the Beloved Students Success Team; (ii) Community of the Beloved Social Justice Committee; (iii) Catholic school board's Chaplaincy Team. I collaborated with the participants during data collection.
Available Literature	I studied all the teaching tools and resources for faith-based equity education recommended by the school board and which are used at Community of the Beloved School which formed part of my documentary review in the report. I collected all teaching maps, pictures and educational symbols for teaching and promoting an inclusive faith-based community of learners at Community of the Beloved.

Data collection techniques	The theoretical framework offered me a theoretical underpinning in determining the kinds of data which I would seek to show the points of tension and convergence in the school culture of the school chosen. This is why I did 4 weeks daily visits to Community of the Beloved to arrange and conduct one-on-one interviews with teachers who volunteered in a private setting; and to organise and conduct the focus group interviews in a private setting. I participated in school prayer sessions and social justice activities on equity and diversity in the school and in their outreach to the poor in the community of Scarborough.
Data Analysis Technique	I classified and thematised textual data from interviews and focus group discussions as well as operationalised the findings into a narrative along with the literature collected from the school.
Writing an Illuminative Ethnographic Report	My final presentation was divided into two chapters, one dealing with the challenges and the opportunities of equity and diversity education to meet the requirements of a multicultural Canada and the other narrating the strategies and practices of an inclusive school culture in Community of the Beloved Catholic High School. The presentation was structured into three selective coding of themes linked up as: text (school culture), context (the teaching resources and tools for equity and diversity at Community of the Beloved) and pre-text (the wider Catholic faith-based educational principle/practices on equity) and the principles/practices for equity and inclusivity adopted by the Ontario Ministry of Education for all publicly-

	funded schools in the province.
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3.4 Target population, sample and techniques

According to Creswell (2013:204) there are five factors which are important in qualitative research which impact the choice of target population, namely;

- (i) One should choose a site and a target population which can best help the researcher to understand the central phenomenon of the research;
- (ii) Accessibility to the site is also necessary so that the researcher can visit the site freely and as often as possible to gather the information needed to understand and interpret the central phenomenon;
- (iii) Data collection should include a variety of sources (interviews, observations and documents) which help to give a fuller narrative of the central phenomenon without restricting the views of participants;
- (iv) It is preferable to avoid using pre-designed instruments developed by someone else but rather to develop one's own based on the specific context of the field research. In addition, it is also important to have a good instrument for recording the information supplied by the respondents which gives the respondents freedom and makes them comfortable and feel safe in sharing information with the researcher;
- (v) the need to maintain an ethical procedure in qualitative data collection

“with sensitivity to the challenges and ethical issues of gathering information face-to-face and often in people’s homes and work places” (Creswell, 2013:204).

This research used purposeful non-probability and critical sampling techniques. In this approach the researcher seeks the participants who have a rich wealth of information to share about the central issue of the research. These participants as well as the sites are chosen because they are ‘information rich’ (Patton, 1990: 169). Creswell writes that purposeful sampling is very intentional because the researcher is deliberate in seeking the individuals and sites which will help shed light on the central phenomenon of the research. He proposes further:

In any given qualitative study, you may decide to study a site (e.g. one college campus), several sites (three small liberal arts campuses), individuals or groups (freshmen students), or some combination...Purposeful sampling applies to both individuals and sites (Creswell, 2013:206).

In non-probability sampling, the selection is derived when are researcher seeks to a target group:

In the full knowledge that it does not represent the wider population; it simply represents itself. This is frequently the case in small-scale research, for example, as with one or two schools , two or three groups of students, or a particular group of teachers, where no attempt to generalize is desired; this is frequently the case for some ethnographic research...”(Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007:113).

The choice of target for sampling was also made bearing in mind that this is a research that focuses on a school where the central phenomenon is present and which reflects clearly the challenges and opportunities of diversity and multicultural education in a faith-based setting. The site was chosen because it reflected clearly the contestations and successes of trying to implement a faith-based equity and diversity

education where both the claims of faith and governmental educational programmes are constantly in conflict. The interrogative theoretical framework seeks to identify the horizons of differences, the critical incidents in the school which expose the tension between the dominant cultural frameworks which undergird the school culture, and the challenges of marginalisation and its effects for marginalised groups.

Therefore, I used a critical sampling technique which was a sort of 'blue-print' for data gathering. This helped me to do some mapping in terms of what school to visit, and what target population would offer me the opportunity to be immersed in the central phenomenon of the research. Community of the Beloved was thus chosen because of the need to choose a particular site out of many relative to the illuminative stories which I was seeking for identifying the challenges and opportunities for faith-based education in a high school in the separate school board.

Even though I made an open invitation to the teachers based on their roles in the school, the teachers who were approached were only those who have some roles or responsibilities in developing or implementing the equity and inclusivity strategy of the school. Invitations were also extended to those teachers who had some lead in specific programs for equity and diversity either in the school or in the students' work with the poor outside the school. This technique seeks to help the researcher to "study a critical sample because it is an exceptional case and the researcher can learn much about the phenomenon. For example, you study teenage violence in a high school where a student with a gun threatened a teacher." (Creswell, 2013:208).

The research is an ethnographic study of a school. I chose Community of the Beloved Catholic High School, in the Toronto Catholic District School Board for this research. Community of the Beloved Catholic High School has been identified by the school board as representing the best picture of the diversity of Toronto in terms of its diverse demographics, institutional multicultural priorities and programs and the pluralistic constitution of their teaching and administrative staff. According to the recommendation/data of the school board on this school given to this researcher, Community of the Beloved is one of the first high schools in the school board to fully

integrate in their programmes and pedagogies the Catholic school board's multicultural and equity strategy. Community of the Beloved enjoys a long standing reputation for developing programs to meet the unique needs of every student. Community of the Beloved was one of two high schools in the Toronto Catholic District School Board to pilot an integration program for students with special needs. It was among the first schools within the board to introduce programmes ranging from peer counseling and mediation to electronic keyboarding and communications technology. The school was profiled in a video produced by the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association in the 1990's for its exemplary work in developing programmes that integrate Catholic values and teachings into the curriculum to reflect diversity and equity (TDCSB online data and report). It was among the first schools in the board to implement the board-wide equity and inclusivity strategy, and the principal PJT is a key member of the board's social justice committee which helped to draft the equity and inclusivity strategy and monitors its implementation. The school pioneers an impressive social justice program for which the school was awarded the Michael Carty award for outstanding initiatives in Catholic education.

Community of the Beloved was recognised for its "Stop the Stigma" week which focuses on raising awareness and educating the public on mood disorders. It also received another Exemplary Practice Award for its ABC (Anti-Bullying Campaign). Furthermore, Community of the Beloved has been acknowledged for being at the forefront of environmental and social justice issues such as working with the Catholic organisation Development and Peace on the "Eliminate the Plastic Water Bottle Campaign" throughout the Catholic School Board. Community of the Beloved water bottle pirate ship was awarded top prize and is proudly displayed in the atrium of the school board. When it comes to the areas of ecology, this school has been an eco-GOLD certified school for several years and has an active eco-club called the Treehuggers. For over 30 years the Scartrek walkathon of the school has been a Scarborough tradition. Each year the school decides on a charity to focus on and half the money raised from the walkathon is donated to that cause. Community of the Beloved also focuses her programmes on the Catholic Graduate Expectations which

are the foundational values and principles on which Catholic schooling in Ontario, Canada is built.

According to the Principal of the school, PJT(interview, December 15, 2014):

Community of the Beloved students are continually moved to compassion and generosity in serving Christ through feeding the homeless in the "Out of the Cold" programme, in assembling Christmas baskets for the needy and in other forms of witness. At Community of the Beloved we continually educate our students on the causes of poverty and injustice and take action to bring forth God's kingdom on earth.

This is the spirit of giving and social justice that continues to frame the equity and inclusive culture of Community of the Beloved Catholic High School. Initiatives such as Holocaust Awareness week, National Bullying Awareness week and Respect for Life week are organized each year and filled with activities, guest speakers and numerous learning opportunities for students. Community of the Beloved's CSAC is a group of committed parents who have promoted and organized initiatives to support teenage development such as the Red Cross workshop on Healthy Teenage Relationships and Inspiring Youth to Reach their Career Potential. In 2013 Community of the Beloved celebrated 40 years of excellence in education. It is within this context of social justice initiatives that Community of the Beloved approaches to diversity and multicultural education were studied. Community of the Beloved thus offered me a good field area for harvesting sufficient data to analyse the central phenomenon under consideration. This central phenomenon is diversity and multicultural education in a faith-based setting as understood through the board- wide strategy developed by the social justice committee and the board's office on safe schools, students' success and equity and diversity education. These board-wide strategies have been guided and framed in line with the protocol and directives of the Ontario Ministry of Education. The equity structure of Community of the Beloved Catholic High School is presented as

follows:

- School Population: 1230 students (including 72 international visa students from China).
- Population of Teachers: 87 teachers including 3 Administrators (1 Principal and 2 VP's).
- Executive Members of the Parent Council (CSAC) : 5 members.
- Executive Members of the Student Council: 11 (including international student representative).
- Support Staff and educational assistants for students with special needs: 30 Support Staff members which include Educational Assistants, 1 Audio Visual Technician, 1 Child and Youth Worker consultant, 2 Hall Monitors, and 5 Secretaries.
- Student Mentors: 75 students trained as Student Mentors (leaders).
- Social Justice Committee: 12 members.
- Student Success Committee: 6 members.

3.5 Data collection and data sources

The data for this research were collected over a four-week period using ethnographic research instruments. Ethnography fits into the theoretical framework of this research in its claims that schools are sites of conflict and that school culture using the structural identity consultation theory (SIC) is self-constituting and not something that can be imposed or legislated from the outside. In order to identify the critical issues within the school culture, one must proceed through listening to those on the frontlines of the school—teachers, administrators, parents and students. In order to find the dialectical tension in the school between dominant cultures and the voices of students from the margins—minorities, LGBTQ, immigrants, etc., one needs

to adopt a research instrument which enables one to encounter the challenges and gauge the opportunity of implementing a school-wide equity and inclusive education. Ethnography, according to Gomm (2009: 119):

Refers to research conducted by the observation of naturally occurring events, often by participant observation research conducted on the assumption that it is necessary for researchers to experience life as their research subjects experience it...More loosely applied to research producing any kind of qualitative data including qualitative interviews.

Creswell (2013:481) identifies some key points in every ethnography with regard to educational research which makes this approach most suitable for this research: (a) ethnography as a design in educational research is useful for studying ‘groups in education, their behaviors, beliefs and language and how they develop shared patterns of interacting overtime’; (b) ethnography is also a qualitative design for ‘describing, analyzing, and interpreting the patterns of a particular group that shares a particular culture in terms of their beliefs, organisation, values, and mission’; (c) Creswell adds that the goal of ethnography is to write ‘a cultural portrait’ by paying attention to cultural patterns and cultural domains, cultural behavior, cultural knowledge, language, etc. and doing taxonomic analysis based on the patterns established; (d) the field work is aimed at gathering data and evidence through multiple sources in order to gain enough bandwidth to transmit a report which illuminates the central phenomenon of the research (2013: 481). In table 3.3 below I have outlined in operational terms Cresswell’s proposed steps for ethnographic educational field research and how I have modeled the field research conducted at Community of the Beloved.

Table 3.3: Seven Stages in Ethnographical Educational Research (Cresswell, 2013: 478-481)

Stages	Task
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<p>Identifying Cultural Themes: Position declared or implied which is actively promoted by a group.</p>	<p>Discover through interviews, observation, the cultural symbols in the school which shed light on the central phenomenon being researched, diversity and multicultural education in a faith-based setting. Community of the Beloved Catholic High School is founded to advance the central mission of Catholic education as articulated in the Ontario Graduate Expectation document. This sets the context of the school culture and provides the foundation for the equity and inclusivity strategy of the board within which the programmes which recognise the rights of minorities like students with same-sex orientation and Black students are implemented.</p>
<p>Identifying a Culture-Sharing Group where this cultural Domain can be 'thickly described.'</p>	<p>Community of the Beloved Catholic High school is such a group. It is made up of teachers and students, administrators, social workers, and chaplains who interact on a regular basis. Community of the Beloved is representative of a larger group of Catholic schools in the Toronto Catholic District School Board. Such shared pattern of behaviour, belief and language are embodied in the Graduate School Expectations and the foundational principles and worldview of a Catholic faith-based schooling and it is reflected in</p>

	the mission statement of Community of the Beloved.
Field Work	I gathered data over a period of four weeks through spending time at the school site while observing the shared patterns of behavior, language and belief.
Description, Themes and Interpretation	I described, classified and thematised the data while offering an interpretative presentation of the data in the light of the documents outlining the equity and inclusivity strategy for equity and multicultural education adopted by the Catholic school board.
Context or setting	In analyzing the data, particular attention was paid to what I observed in the context of the school; the environment that surrounds the school and how the school conveys a sense of an inclusive school culture. The context here will also relate to the analysis which will be helped through the use of teaching materials and helpful resources and

	<p>personnel from the school board office.</p>
<p>Researcher Reflectivity</p>	<p>Writing a report that is consistent with the research design and also a report which though being an etic account excerpts itself from a judgmental subjectivity which can distort the data. But the attempt is to report as clearly and systematically as possible the narrative of this school which gives one a good picture of the central phenomenon under investigation. Denscombe (2007:69) notes also that in writing the report of the ethnography there is the need for the researcher, to give “a public account of the self which explores the role of the researcher’s self.” This personal condition, Denscombe observes, include one’s personal beliefs relating to the topic, personal interests in the area of investigation (vested interest, history of events), and personal expertise in relation to the topic (e.g. qualification and experience). I am a Catholic priest, a teacher and occasional consulting</p>

	workshop leader for principals in the school board but these in no way distort the lenses through which I view the research.
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3.6. Data collection methods and instruments

Three factors were taken into consideration in the design of the research instruments. The first is how it aligns with the theoretical framework of this research in terms of identifying the critical and conflictual points in the equity and inclusivity strategy in order to determine if there is a need for reform. Furthermore, the data collection was also designed with a view to exploring how new theories and approaches to equity and inclusivity in creating a Catholic school culture could emerge through this research especially listening to the 'best practices' of teachers and administrators on the frontline.

The second is the need to generate accurate, valid and reliable data, hence the use of the same questions for individual interviews as well as for focus groups. The second is the ease of use of the instruments by making sure that the format and length of the question are appropriate for the participants. I also used open-ended and closed-response to create some specific direction and to leave room for creativity in the respondents' answers to the questions. The instruments were also designed as much as possible to avoid leading questions. Creswell's (2013: 478-479) helpful guide in data collection methods and instruments was applied. Firstly, I identified the critical issue which is the central phenomenon for this research. Secondly, I sought the necessary permission to conduct the research by obtaining permission from the CDSB in order to locate the research site. Thirdly, I worked with board administrators and the social justice committee and the school council at Community of the Beloved to formulate the questions, assess their comfort zone with regard to the research and build confidence and trust.

Fourthly, I designed the interview protocol and instruments for individual interviews and focus-group discussion using multiple forms and adopting multiple sites for face-to-face interviews. This was adopted in order to make sure that each participant was interviewed in a setting where he or she is comfortable. The interviews were not taped. I took notes on my computer and shared the notes with each participant at the end of the interview to make sure that they agreed with what was recorded in my notes. Finally, I studied the data recorded. As I went through them I developed themes which relate to the central phenomenon, a detailed description of the school culture, and the changes that need to occur in the school setting. These will be presented in the light of the challenges and opportunities of implementing the equity and inclusivity strategy of the board as reported to me from the data collected from my informants.

3.6.1 Interviews

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:349) citing Babbie describe the goal of interview in research as an interaction in which the researcher and respondent (s) discuss:

Their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view. In these senses the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable. The interview is a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard.” Interviews have a high response rate; they allow for probing and clarification, and in a face-to-face interview, the interviewer can observe the respondent while asking questions.

The interview formats used in this research is a structured interview which contains predetermined questions structured around the research questions. These questions were posed to respondents in the personal interview of a critical mass of teachers who have important roles to play in Community of the Beloved equity and diversity education. I also administered a semi-structured interview which was administered in focus group which followed predetermined elements but with room for follow-up or optional questions. In order to enhance the prior preparation of the participants I also used an interview guide.

Cohen and Manion (1998) propose the use of an interview guide which is a clearly laid out instrument which will contain questions and topics which will guide the researcher who is conducting the interview to pose questions to those he or she has selected for a research. This research used a semi-structured interview guide. As Cohen and Manion (1998:271) propose, semi-structured interviews are more flexible than the structured ones since they allow the interviewer to ask the participants major questions and provide opportunity for follow up questions to probe further into some areas which the respondents may not have covered in their response. But there is the need to give the respondents enough time to prepare for the interview and some parameters for the conversation. As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007: 353) recommend the interview guide approach is not to give the questions verbatim

to the respondents ahead of the interview. This could undermine the integrity of the data if the respondents decide to share the questions among themselves. They therefore propose that, “topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in outline form; interviewer decides sequence and working of questions in the course of the interview.” The advantage of using the interview guide according to them (2007: 353) is that, “The outline increases the comprehensiveness of the data and makes data collection somewhat systematic for each respondent. Logical gaps in data can be anticipated and closed. Interviews remain fairly conversational and situational.”

I gave out an interview guide to all the participants ahead of the interview. Many institutional, legal and practical reasons informed this choice. Firstly, the guide given specified the broad topics to be covered since some of the respondents needed to prepare for the interview especially to bring along with them some resources which they referred to in the course of the interview. Secondly, this was a requirement for both the teachers’ union and the board as a prior condition in order that the teachers could make an informed choice about the kind of consent which they were being asked to give for participation in the research. Finally, given the sensitive nature of this research, I felt that giving them a broad outline of topics to be covered without giving them the exact questions which were asked during the interview helped to reduce the tension and suspicion about the intention of the research. During the interviews I was guided by Denscombe’s guidelines (2007: 190-192) for conducting interviews and was attentive, respectful of the feelings of the participants, allowed some moments for the respondents to think through their answers, while using prompts, probes and checks to help them to jiggle their memories. In all the interviews, I avoided passing any judgment on the opinion of the interviewees. Overall, the interviews enquired into the school culture at Community of the Beloved with regard to building an inclusive environment, the nature of interaction in the school, the challenges and opportunities of the school’s diversity in terms of demographic and particularly how black students and students with same-sex orientation feel welcome in the school. I conducted 52 interviews in all.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussion

According to Babbie (2007), “the focus group method is fundamentally a qualitative method based on structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews that allows the interviewer to handle many individuals concurrently” (Babbie 2007: 308). The focus group is a form of group interview involving several participants in addition to the researcher or moderator. Focus group interview questions are usually defined while the emphasis is on interaction between the researcher and the group and the joint construction of meaning. There are two aspects of this instrument. The first is the group interviews. Here the researcher selects several people to discuss a number of topics freely in an open forum. The second is a focus interview in which the interviewees are selected because of their involvement in the particular situation or central phenomenon under consideration with a more structured conversation (Bryman, 2004: 346). However, whereas the focus group could be used for structured, semi-structured or unstructured interviews, Babbie argues that “participants in focus groups are not likely to be chosen through rigorous, probability-sampling methods. This means that the participants do not statistically represent any meaningful population” (Babbie 2007:349). Krueger proposes that (1988), the focus group technique is advantageous for qualitative research because of the following reasons: First, group interviews have the potential of helping the researcher to capture some of the experiential and daily life stories of the stakeholders within their social environment. Second, it is flexible, speedy, low-cost, and has high face validity and so has a high rate of veracity (1988:47). Focus group also has its own limitations. Krueger points out that one of such limitations is that the researcher has less control than in individual interviews over the data. In addition, because of the profusion of information gathered data are difficult to analyse; and requires skillful moderation to keep the group focused on the topic and theme; sometimes assembling the group is very difficult and where one has several focus groups, they may all yield contradicting answers to similar topics and themes.

Despite these limitations, the focus group method is still widely accepted and used as a reliable information-gathering method in qualitative research (1988:47). Some of the advantages of focus group for ethnography noted by Cohen, et al. (2007:376-377) are: it helps to orient the research to a particular focus; it helps to develop themes, and topics; it is very helpful in generating a hypothesis that derives from the insight and data that the group generates; it is helpful as a tool for evaluating the value of the data as the group itself provides a forum for testing the verities of the information being given; it helps also to generate useful information about previous studies; and it is an aid towards retrieving information from the collective memory of a culture-sharing group.

In this research, I used a semi-structured approach in the focus groups. This was done in order to allow for maximum flexibility in both the choice of participants for the focus group and the questions posed to them. I used pre-set interview questions which helped me and the group to have a general pattern, structure and sequence in each of the three hours of the focus group discussion. At the same time, this structure gave me and the participants the flexibility to ask follow-up questions as well as to answer some of the questions of the group about the purpose of the research and to clarify for them some the categories and terms in the interview guide. This approach helped me to avoid some of the challenges educational researchers encounter in focus group discussion in the sociology of education namely, the challenge of focus creep. This occurs when the topic under discussion stretches beyond the intended central phenomenon for the research. Particularly in the main themes of my research which are very divisive and contested issues in diversity and equity education, a semi-structured pattern in the focus group helped to reorient the conversation anytime there was a danger of a focus creep. The second challenge which this structure helped me to address was to control turning the focus group into a pressure group. There were times in the course of the conversation where I felt that the teachers saw me as someone who will make their voices heard by both the board administrators and church authority about the pressure which they were undergoing

in implementing the equity and inclusivity strategy of the board.

The semi-structured approach helped me to constantly bring back the discussion to the central theme of the research and to elicit a more direct and relevant response to the questions beyond the personal passions and concerns of the participant. While I was happy to hear such a passionate cry on how to reach out to the students on the margins, sticking to the pattern of the discussion and more specifically to the interview instrument used for the focus group was achieved through the normative pattern inherent in the focus group. This allowed the participants in the focus group to shed additional light on the themes and topics under discussion rather than spend time venting on their concerns about the board or the school administrators, which were not the concern of the research. In order to centre our discussion on the themes and topics, participants in each focus group were chosen based on their expertise and responsibility in either the school board or at Community of the Beloved or both as in the case of the principal and chaplains at Community of the Beloved.

In this research, I conducted three focus group discussions each for two sessions of 2 hours. One of the focus group discussions took place at the CDSB office and the two group interviews with the school council and the Equity and Diversity Council of Community of the Beloved took place at the school's Conference Room. The teachers or administrators chosen for the group interviews were purposively chosen because of their roles in the design and implementation of the equity and diversity programs of the CDSB and for the Community of the Beloved Catholic Secondary School. The focus groups were: (1) the chaplaincy team of the CDSB to which the chaplain of Community of the Beloved belongs and which also acts as a resource and support team for the equity and diversity programs at Community of the Beloved and other high schools under the board; (2) the Social Justice team of Community of the Beloved; (3) the Community of the Beloved School Council; and (4) student success committees.

My goal in the focus group discussion was to identify through the lenses of these teachers, students, and administrators their shared understanding of implementing the equity and diversity strategy of the school board. Particularly, I discovered through these teachers what they identified as the main challenges and opportunities for implementing the strategy in order to create an inclusive school culture. In order to gain as much insight as possible and control the flow of the discussion, a semi-structured interview guide was used in the interview. The interview guide was divided into four sections (questions about understanding of the content of the equity and diversity program, questions about the interpretation of the guidelines, questions about implementation of the program, and questions about the institutional and personal context of the entire equity and diversity program). I also made an attempt to meet with all participants individually before the interview to create trust, address their fears and solicit their co-operation. Finally, prior to the commencement of the interview, I explained to the participants the goal of the research, what was expected of them and the rules which would guide our conversation, while highlighting the confidentiality of the matters discussed on my own part and on the part of the participating teachers and administrators.

3.6.3 Document Review.

The document review focused on the resources being used at Community of the Beloved for creating an inclusive school culture and a Catholic educational environment which is open to all students without regard to sex, sexuality, race, color or creed. The reviewed documents are books, leadership resources, videos and teaching aids for realizing the equity and inclusivity strategy of the board at Community of the Beloved. Some of the documents are generic because they are guidelines which the Toronto Catholic District School Board offers to all her high school as resources and working tools. Some of the documents are specific to

Community of the Beloved especially the SLIP Goals (2014-2015) and ESL team support programmes which help specific students who belong to minority groups and those who are 'at risk' because of their background. All these documents, however, have the same goal which is to create an inclusive school culture and effectively implement the equity and inclusive strategy of the province which aims at students' success. The documents show how this can be realized through a student's engagement process for social justice and eliminating the harmful effects of social reproduction in the student's ability to learn in the school environment. This resource helps to enhance the social integration of all students.

I did not undertake a documentary review of text books or teaching resources which relate to equity pedagogy or resources which address the challenges of the hidden curriculum. This is because the focus of this study is not on curriculum or leadership. This research is not concerned with how transformational pedagogies of inclusion are being framed into the classroom experience in combating the effects of mainstreaming in educational practices. The primary goal of the research is the school culture and the challenges and opportunities which the teachers see in implementing the board-wide equity and inclusive environment for students' success. The following resources are presented as 'the context' for the implementation of the programmes which Community of the Beloved has embraced: (i) *Belonging: Choosing our Future* (DVD-ROMs); *I Believe: The Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations*, *The Enduring Gift: Catholic Education in the Province of Ontario* used by Community of the Beloved in training of students and teachers on social justice, civic citizenship, history of faith-based education's engagement with social issues; (ii) *Engaging Students with Poverty in Mind: Practical Strategies for Raising Achievement* by Eric Jensen used by all schools in the board in working with students from minority groups and low income demographics of which African Canadian and Aboriginal are in the lowest rung; (iii) *Creating Safe Schools: A Bullying Prevention Guide for Teachers* produced by the Ontario's Teachers' Federation (OTF) and accepted in the Catholic schools as helpful aid in creating an inclusive and safe

school culture for all students in the faith-based school setting; (iv) *Equity Continuum: Action for Critical Transformation in Schools and Classrooms*, produced by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto and proposed by the Catholic school as a useful guide for teachers in creating an inclusive school culture; (v) *Board Learning Improvement Plan K-12*, produced by the Social Justice Committee and Student's Achievement Committee of the Board to guide the board schools on creating a school culture which promotes equity and diversity and Catholic multicultural learning framework.

3.7 Trustworthiness of research instruments

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), in any qualitative research project, four issues of trustworthiness must be addressed: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility refers to how to make sure that the research findings represent a “credible” conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from the participants’ original data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:296). Transferability is the extent to which the research findings can apply or transfer to other related areas beyond a particular research inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:316). Dependability refer to how to assess the quality of the integrated processes from data collection, data analysis, to generating a theory (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:316). Confirmability about how to measure how well the inquiry’s findings and conclusions are supported by the data collected. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:318). Of all these variables, credibility seems decisive for my research in terms of the truth claims which the research will make based on the data generated. To address credibility, I administered the same questions to all the 52 teachers interviewed in the research and similar questions were used in all the three focus groups. Even though this research was not quantitative research using measurable instruments, I wanted to generate many narratives from the field so as to illuminate the themes being developed through the research. Thus, I set out from the beginning of the field research to gather as much data as possible from Community of the Beloved because I am convinced that more data gathered helps to strengthen the arguments on the themes being developed from the narrative. In addition, the board strategy for diversity and equity education in a faith-based

setting comes from open documents which are available to the wider public and hence raises a higher threshold for the researcher in terms of validating one's conclusion based on a rich reservoir of data. Indeed, the research is not so much concerned with operationalising or weighting the data against some variables, but more in giving a detailed narrative of how the equity and inclusivity strategy of the board is being implemented at Community of the Beloved and identifying the challenges and opportunities which they face in the process through the voices of various stakeholders.

3.8 Ethical protocol

Ethical protocol is concerned with issues of privacy, confidentiality, consent, and dissemination of the materials generated from human subjects. The research conforms to the ethical protocol of the UNISA authority who granted permission to conduct this study, and the participating institutions. I worked with the thesis supervisor in designing the research instruments and protocol to meet the requirements and ethical review of UNISA. Furthermore, the research also was subjected to two other ethics research reviews both by the Catholic District School Board and the University of Toronto through St Michael's College where I received an initial grant to engage in this research. Consistent with the research protocol agreed with the Catholic District School Board (appendix F), the name of the school and the board have been delinked.

3.9 Data Analysis

There are many approaches to doing ethnographic qualitative data analysis including grounded theory, interpretative phenomenological analysis and narrative analysis. In many instances, researchers adopt elements of each based on the nature of the data collected. This research used an interrogative theoretical framework which dealt with interpretation of the data which illumined the central phenomenon. Punch (2008:194) argues that "there is no single right way to do qualitative data analysis –

no single methodological framework."In this research, three concurrent activities were integrated in the data analysis, in order to paint the portrait of the critical and conflictual points in the school culture. These three concurrent are: *data reduction* which involved deciding after going through the whole transcript of the interviews which materials were to be chosen as helpful for illuminating the central phenomenon; *data display* through which I ordered the data in a meaningful, systematic and coherent presentation, and *conclusion* wherein I sought to establish with evidence meanings, themes, patterns, and recommendations from the participants in this research both at Community of the Beloved Catholic High School and the different unit heads at the Board office in the areas of equity and inclusive education, chaplaincy and social justice, safe schools group and students' success (Miles & Huberman 1994:11-12).

In the qualitative data analysis, I used a selective coding to systematically categorize the main themes which emerged from the ethnographic field work at Community of the Beloved school. I employed aspects of the grounded theory's selective coding approach as well as the thematic narrative analytical tropes. I chose to categorize the data through a narrative hermeneutical framework of text, context, and pre-text. This research is an experience-centered narrative ethnographic research which examined what goes on in a faith-based Catholic school especially in their daily effort to implement the equity and inclusivity strategy of the Catholic school board through multicultural education in order to create an inclusive school culture. Squire, Andrews and Maria Tamboukou (2008:5-6) argue that narrative research is an ethnographic study which gives the researcher greater flexibility in both the gathering of data and in analysis because there are no *a priori* limits to the starting point and finishing points of the qualitative framework.

Furthermore, it offered me a bigger bandwidth to transmit the diverse epistemological significance of the data whether it is generated through interviews, the involvement of the participants in the research or in the researcher's search for objectivity (Squire et al. 2008:1). But an important element in their characterization which was germane for this research as a critical ethnography was the use of an

empirical investigation to understand a reality which manifested elements of social reproduction and where the researcher looked at how to improve the central phenomenon through the creation of an inclusive school culture (McLaren & Giarelli, 1995:2). Squire et al. point out that the analysis of data must always seek to show, “whether stories are representing internal individual states or external social circumstances” (Squire, et al. 2008:5).

Therefore, in the narratives drawn from the field there is always assumed to be ‘individual, internal representations of phenomenon—events, thoughts and feelings—to which narrative gives external expression’ (Squire, et al. 2008: 5). But there is also the ‘hidden transcript’ which could be the ‘hidden cultural grammar,’ the worldview, the bias, fears, doubts, pain and marginalization which may not often be manifest in the narrative. This is why this research sought through its qualitative analysis to show that conclusions which I drew are derived from data, but that these data were not simply the surface level narrative, but were also iterative or recursive, building upon the faith-based context of schooling (see for example Brayman, 2004: 401).

The analysis proceeded in two steps. The first I set the analytical framework for coding, classification and thematisation of data collected. I employed the narrative hermeneutical framework of text, context and pre-text. This structure is consistent with the interrogative nature of the theoretical framework of this research. I employed particularly the framework of Ricoeur (1991:106) in “What is a Text” which is very influential in analysis of narrative from a culture-sharing group. The school culture is presented as *the text* ; the resources and tool for creating an inclusive school community of diversity is *the context* (the school community—the place of interaction with the other, and the globe including the material and the non-material world); and the wider Catholic faith-based educational principles and practices as well as the equity and inclusive guidelines of the Ontario Ministry of Education both of which offer the foundation for equity and diversity education presented as *the pre-text*. The life of a student in the school is like a text and this text

of the student cannot be fully understood outside of the text of the school culture, and the context of the family situation, and the wider societal pre-text of social reproduction for minority groups and people of color in Canada and the challenging framing of LGBTQ students as abnormal students in many school environment as we reported in our literature review.

In this light, we understand the pre-text and context in the thinking of Ricoeur (1991:108) as:

The situation, the surroundings, and the circumstantial milieu of discourse. It is in relation to this circumstantial milieu that discourse is fully meaningful; the return to reality is ultimately a return to this reality which can be indicated 'around' the speakers, 'around' if we may say so the instance of the discourse itself.

As Connerty (1990:387) argues in relation to Miller Hilis (1974:455):

the theoretical status of historical narrative is dependent on the existence of and access to a pre-narrative reality, of which the narrative is a simple copy. But the adequacy of the narrative history as a representation of the historical context can be judged only with reference to the context; knowledge of the context is available only from the text itself—the validity of which is not yet proved.

One of the findings of modern social theories, especially critical social theories and conflictual theories—as stated in the discussion of the theoretical framework of this research—is the reality of cultural reproduction. Social reproduction draws attention to the social situation which we find in many parts of the world of social inequity and social exclusion. It says that who I am, the choices I make, and who I may become can actually be shaped by the cultural and social factors into which I was born (see for instance McLaren & Giarelli, 1995, 1-19). There are some *a priori* social constructions of my identity and my social conditioning which may help shape or reshape my

cultural life for better or for worse. The pre-text of my life, may actually be the only text with which I begin to write my own biography. Social reproduction as pre-text is particularly so with regard to minorities, people on the margins and many whose lives are shaped and reshaped by the kinds of stereotypes, bias and prejudice which often create distance between peoples. This is why this research wishes to use these triple codings of text, context and pre-text as the qualitative analytical framework for classifying the data generated from the field work at Community of the Beloved

The second operation in the qualitative analysis which flows from the first will be the task of thematic description of the data through a grounded theory's systematic coding. This approach to data analysis involves, "the procedure of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development" (Bryman, 2004: 402). The task at this second stage helped me to focus on cultural behavior in the school environment (through participant observation), cultural symbols in the school environment (through the documentary study of the foundational documents on equity and inclusivity strategy of both the board and the school and through a study of some of the images, and symbols for multicultural education in the school), and cultural knowledge (by analyzing the data from interviews and focus discussion of the chaplain group, safe school committee and social justice committee). Both approaches in the qualitative analysis were taken not as successive or chronological but as interwoven and intermingled in the process of the data analysis.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter I have described the design of this research and the methodology adopted in both the gathering of data, coding of data and in interpretation and analysis of data. I have shown how this method fits into the interrogative theoretical framework for this research. The rationale behind each decision at every stage of the methodology has been indicated while showing why the ethnographic narrative qualitative approach is the preferred approach for the collection, analysis, presentation and interpretation of data. In sum, this chapter has explained how both

the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of this research shaped the design of the research, the kind of data which I sought through the field study, and how the data will be reduced, coded, analysed and presented in the findings. It also specified the hermeneutical keys which will be used for coding and presenting the findings from the field research. I will be using three codings of context, pre-text and text in the presentation of the findings in Chapter Four. The challenges and opportunities of implementing an equity and diversity program in Community of the Beloved Catholic High School were presented using these three codes which highlight the school culture, the teaching resources and tools for creating an equity and inclusive school culture, and the cultural context within which Community of the Beloved is conducting her faith-based educational mission to high school students.

Chapter Four

Presentation, interpretation and discussion of results: Strategies and implementation of diversity and multicultural education

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is structured into three parts with regard to the data analysis. Firstly, it presents a review portrait of the documents used at Community of the Beloved by teachers for creating an inclusive school culture and for realising the objectives of diversity and multicultural education. It also shows how the narratives of the teachers and students reflect the adequacy or inadequacy of their understanding of the goal of this central dimension of education. Secondly, it presents, interprets and analyses the responses by respondents to the questions relating to the understanding of diversity and multicultural education in the context of the Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education (CEIE) and the Ontario Ministry of Education's Equity Inclusive Education (EIE) strategies. Thirdly, the chapter presents, interprets and analyses the responses to the questions about the activities and programmes which Community of the Beloved embrace for realising the goals of the CEIE and the EIE. I identified three key themes from the discussion which formed the coding for this analysis. These are: (i) on the meaning of diversity, multiculturalism and equity education as seen through the lens of practitioners; (ii) the strategies adopted by the schools in integrating the CEIE and the EIE; (iii) narratives from practitioners which reflect their satisfaction with their equity and inclusive strategies of their school and Catholic school board.

The chapter follows the tripartite structure for qualitative analysis which I proposed

in the previous chapter. I have classified the data based on three broad categories of analysis to help present the data in a thematic and narrative manner. The school culture is presented as *the text*; the resources and tool for creating an inclusive school community of diversity is *the context*; and the wider Catholic faith-based educational principles and practices, as well as the equity and inclusive guidelines of the Ontario Ministry of Education, both of which offer the foundation for equity and diversity education are presented as *the pre-text*. The life of a student in the school is like a text which cannot be fully understood outside of context of the school culture, and the context of the family situation, and the wider societal pre-text of social reproduction and inter-generational poverty afflicting many minority groups and people of colour in Canada. This pre-text is also key to understanding the framing of LGBTQ students as abnormal students, bullying and all kinds of intolerant behaviour directed against them in many school environments as I reported in our literature review and as alluded to in the *Accepting School Bill 13* of 2012. The first part of the chapter focuses on the text, the second on the school culture and the strategies for inclusion is the context, while the final part is the pre-context dealing with the wider questions among stakeholders—students, teachers, administrators, and parents, on how Community of the Beloved is meeting the challenges and opportunities of diversity and multicultural education consistent with the EIE and the CEIE.

4.2 Implementing of diversity and multicultural education at Community of the Beloved

In this section I present and analyse the implementation of diversity and multicultural education at Community of the Beloved. The goal of the implementation programmes and activities, i.e. both the EIE (Equity and Inclusive Education) and the CEIE (Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education), is to create an inclusive school culture which guarantees students' success through a progressive and consistent Student Learning Improvement Plan (SLIP). I begin by presenting what the resources being used by the teachers and administrators propose for

understanding this new area of education in the Catholic school. Because this is a key factor in presenting the adequacy of the school culture vis-à-vis the inclusivity strategy, I highlight the key claims of the resources and documents for creating an inclusive culture which I reviewed during my field work at Community of the Beloved. The data from the field point to a huge gap between what the texts and teaching resources propose to the teachers and what the teachers actually understand about equity and diversity. The data also show that teachers in the Catholic schools in Ontario are relying on resources which sometimes present a whole set of propositions and worldviews with regard to diversity and multicultural education which are different from what the board presents in its strategy on adapting Catholic social ethics to the Ministry of Education's requirements for creating an inclusive school culture. The gap between what the resources say and what is actually being implemented in the school is quite wide as I found from interviews with the teachers.

4.2.1 Documentary review of resources for creating an inclusive school culture at Community of the Beloved Catholic High School.

The documents presented here helped to generate the three themes around the central phenomenon. This is particularly with regard to the how they helped to shape the data from the field especially the narratives and experience of teachers and administrators on the three themes .

The first document which is extensively used by the Community of the Beloved as a guide for teachers on building an inclusive school culture is titled, "Belonging: Choosing our Future." This is a short training and formation video which teachers use to introduce students to social justice and how to accept each other no matter the colour, religion, language, gender, sex or sexuality. This video is not used as part of the classroom curriculum or pedagogy except in the religious education class, which in the high school focuses on social justice under the rubric of Catholic Social Teaching. But this resource is used majorly in extra-curricular formation for students who are interested in some of the many outreach programmes to the poor, which are

organised by the school. Usually, it is the first presentation given to student volunteers who are involved in the outreach programme like Food Drive, Out from the Cold, etc. This is a powerful half hour presentation on what it means to belong to a community of inclusion using the model developed by foremost Canadian humanitarian, Jean Vanier in L'Arche. According to L'Arche's (video, 2012), introduction to the video, "in this intimate conversation, internationally acclaimed Canadian humanitarian Jean Vanier responds to high school students' questions about belonging, bullying, creating inclusive school environments, finding one's life direction, and navigating future challenges."

This was a collaborative project between L'Arche and the school board. In this video presentation, L'Arche, the founder, Jean Vanier leads the students on a journey of discovery into answering the following questions from a very practical perspective:

(i) What is belonging? (ii) Jean Vanier's inspiration; (iii) Success or desire; (iv) Including Others; (v) Dealing with Bullies; (vi) Where is for Hope for Us; (vii) 20 Years from Now. L'Arche is an international non-denominational movement of communities where people with and without disabilities share life together. It is a community of inclusion of 147 communities located in 35 countries today in five continents having grown from a small neighborhood of Trosly-Breuil located North of Paris, France in 1964. According to L'Arche International (2016), "The small community grew fast, soon welcoming new people with an intellectual disability and young people from around the world to share their lives". Unforeseen by Vanier, it did not take long for people to decide to create new L'Arche communities in their own countries. And so 1969 saw the creation of the first home near Toronto, Canada, called Daybreak, the first of many later communities in North America. In the 1970's, the vision of L'Arche also inspired people to found L'Arche in India, the Ivory Coast and Honduras." At the heart of belonging according to Vanier, is that each person makes "a conscious decision to be part of a group of people with a vision of truth and justice and love." (<http://www.larche.org/discover/ourhistory/>).

L'Arche which is French for 'Arc', conveys the image of a world of differences, held together in love by the caring and compassionate attitude of everyone for one another especially to the vulnerable. This video presentation uses the experiences of L'Arche where people accept each other with their limitations, and where there is an intentional daily effort to create a community in order to challenge students through a series of practical outreach to replicate the same inclusive community spirit in the school. In Community of the Beloved for instance, students are challenged as part of their response to this video to see their differences as beautiful rather than a deficit. Also, every month is dedicated to culturally relevant and practical outreach activities which are oriented to helping the students develop an aspect of inclusive culture, including any of the following key themes in the social justice tool box of Community of the Beloved: community and common good, dignity and rights of every student and their right to participation in school life in an integral way in order to attain self-fulfillment and succeed in school; solidarity and supportive network for vulnerable students and students from poor socio-economic backgrounds, migrants and students of colour. Some of the specific programmes observed during the school visits are discussed in the next section.

In this presentation from L'Arche, the school board wishes the teachers to cultivate the values, attitudes and practices of L'Arche in creating an inclusive school culture. As Vanier explains in this presentation, "building a community in a new cultural, political, religious, social and economic environment is no easy task." The core value of L'Arche, which can help schools develop an inclusive culture is, "the importance of adaptation, and how these values can be expressed and lived out in a variety of ways, with respect to local customs and cultural requirements" (L'Arche, Video, 2012). At the centre of L'Arche's success, is the translation of its core values into local and different contexts and a whole hearted embrace of diversity and what it calls 'everyday solidarity' which involves the active integration of all members especially the weakest members of society.

Accordingly, L'Arche's "openness to diversity demands a good measure of flexibility and creativity, as practices, attitudes and concepts need constant redefinition and evaluation." The organisation was able to achieve this through constant conversation and adaptation based on cultural and religious differences. Jean Vanier shows in this presentation how these values can be discovered both in religious traditions as well as in other humanistic and secular values which can all add together in creating the framework for an inclusive school community. The responses and testimonies of the students featured in the video show also the kind of values which they are convinced could lead them and all students, and indeed the wider school community into a hopeful future. It also shows how these values could help bring about an inclusive and accepting school culture, which will help stamp out attitudes like bullying, homophobia, racism, etc in the school.

One student's response to the L'Arche's inspiration and Vanier's vision in the video is: "When you strip down everything, it all comes to loving others." Another student says that she was challenged to "feel love, invite people into love, see people as more beautiful rather than terrible and not judge people based on where they come from or if they are poor or rich." Another student said; "there is a sense of optimism in this kind of community of inclusion; we must work hard to build such a community of inclusion in our school." Ultimately, as Vanier noted in the presentation, "L'Arche is essentially a place where people who are different can meet and get to know one another." This is also what the school board aims to achieve in every school in the formation of teachers on creating an inclusive school culture. This is clearly stated in the objectives of this resource which include the following:

- Students will learn attitudes that contribute to a safe, positive and welcoming school culture that fosters acceptance and belonging, as opposed to bullying or exclusion.
- Students will reflect on their personal experiences of belonging and inclusion or exclusion and learn elements that make for an inclusive school community

and society.

- Students will apply ethical reasoning and critical thinking skills to situations faced by those who have disabilities in their school and in the local and global community.
- Students will assess their personal interests and gifts and gain insight into their own life journey, their desires for their future career, and the ways in which these can connect with a broader social vision.
- Students will become engaged citizens acting as responsible agents of change, showing increasing willingness to include those who are excluded and to contribute to a more socially just world.
- Students will learn about Jean Vanier and his philosophy and how it could relate to their own lives and future choices.

The limitations observed in this resource have been noted. One teacher (CIV1) said to me in an interview that using L'Arche which are communities of support especially for people with disability, might give the impression that "diversity of culture, race, sexuality, religion and socio-economic status is a disability or a defect and the dominant culture needs to step down from the high horse to accommodate students from the non-dominant culture" (CIV1, 16 April, 2015). The other point observed is that there are many students who have never been introduced to this programme. At the focus group at Community of the Beloved all the participants knew about the resource and implement its principles in the activities which they undertake in the Heritage Month and the Black History Month as well as in their food drive at Christmas to support students from poor socio-economic groups; equity walks and anti-discrimination campaigns.

But what of those teachers and students who are not aware of this resource especially in the light of the school board's CEIE? This strategy proposes a school culture which is built through the collaboration of all when it states: "consistent with

Catholic teachings and denominational rights, the Board is committed to serving students, families and staff in its diverse Catholic community by incorporating the principles of equity and inclusive education in all aspects of its policies, programmes, procedures and practices (Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2011, 1). However, there is the emphasis on the participation of every person—teachers, students, administrators, special education experts, parents etc. But if as I observed that this key programme is not being used by most students it gives the impression that the training for inclusive school culture is specialised. Furthermore, it might give the impression also that the CEIE strategy is still a programme of choice rather than a goal which everyone should embrace. Viewed in this light, the CEIE may be perceived as not being everyone's business or rather that it is anyone's business, meaning that it is still something optional and driven by subjective interest rather than a common school mission.

Furthermore, the school board's strategy specified that school improvement in creating an accepting school environment should be evidence-based. This requires not simply the aggregation of data about students success, but the participation of students, teachers, parents and administrators in bringing this about through constant monitoring of students formation and the impact of the strategy on them (CEIE, 2011: 8.6-8.10). "It is at the heart of our social justice agenda and the foundation of the success of the students. It is a board and provincial requirement which should not be treated as a program of choice or another item in the syllabus or curriculum. We are talking about the school environment which everyone should breath or like St Paul says 'live, move and be' through this strategy" (TDC2, interview 16 December, 2014).

But the most significant observation which is important in how this resource is being used is that it still labours under the limitations of the human-relations approach to diversity and multicultural education. This resource wants to create a community of

inclusion but it relies on appeal to emotions and spiritual platitudes without engaging the fundamental challenges of most teachers identified in the interviews with regard to dealing with prejudice and bias. The human relations approach to equity, diversity and multiculturalism “helps to promote communication and good relations among students of different backgrounds” (Sleeter & Grant, 1993:427). These authors also argue that this approach does not show a linkage between what the human relations approach proposes and cross-cultural differences. In addition, this approach has not been able to show a strong link between practical application with the theoretical and conceptual issues in social psychology in dealing with such issues as the gap between theory and praxis, good intentions and social justice issues for minorities. This is particularly with regard to how to close the opportunity gap and educational inequity caused by social reproduction and inter-generational poverty. Particularly significant is how this resource can be translated into a strategy to change the systems which continue to perpetuate structures of injustice of systemic racism or segregation. This is necessary because Sleeter and Grant argued that this is one important way of dealing effectively with intergroup conflict and prejudice formation which are often calcified in the systems and programmes. Sleeter and Grant (1993), after an extensive review of some of the literature of human relations approach in Canada and USA, argue strongly that the approach proposed does not offer a strong foundation and framework for diversity and equity education because:

This approach seems to suggest that people should get along, communicate, and appreciate each other within the existing stratified social system. Advocates may hope that eventually better communication will lead, for example, to cooperation between Blacks and Whites to reduce the incidence of poverty among Blacks. But issues such as poverty, institutional discrimination, and powerlessness are addressed little or not at all in the Human Relations literature (Sleeter & Grant, 1993: 427).

In this light, one could conclude that if a majority of the students at Community of the Beloved do not use the central resources for creating an inclusive school and are

not influenced by the content and challenged by the practices recommended, chances are that this lack of formation may vitiate any attempt to realise the goals of the equity and inclusivity strategy.

The second resource document (video) for creating an inclusive school culture is *I believe: The Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectation*. This document was produced by the Institute of Catholic Education and the Canada Catholic Television Channel, Salt and Light. It is a resource used for welcoming new students, for training safe school team and Student Leadership team. In addition, it is usually used as a workshop tool for grade nine students, and at the beginning of the school year for the social justice group. It uses three approaches to communicate the message. The first is the use of first person narrative, wherein five students give testimonies and stories of what the Catholic graduate expectations mean for them within the context of the school culture and their overall academic and personal formation. Secondly, it uses first person account by teachers to show how they are translating Catholic social

teaching into daily practices in building an inclusive school culture. Thirdly, it offers the testimony and witnesses of other stakeholders in the Catholic school system—parents, trustee members of school board, and school administrators on how the Graduate Expectations are helping to bring about changes in the lives of their students, children in their families and the wider society. Students in the workshop are then encouraged to bring stories from the school or outside the school where the Graduate Expectations can provide them some resources for problem-solving.

Another aspect of this resource which is worthy of highlighting in this section is the effective use of audio-visuals and graphics in the production of this video. The interviews are set within the framework of a multicultural collage of colours and religious art cast on murals with a tapestry of picturesque artwork from Africa, Asia, and Canadian First Nations. The picture of Jesus painted on the wall was of a Black Jesus, and the natural setting is a combination of African Safari images of animals and

nature. This is set within an artistically constructed horizon of cascading waters and waves that merge finely with the beautiful constellations of stars, moon, sun and stellar neon dancing from the skies with points of light upon the earth.

According to one of the creators (CIV) of the video in an interview, “the idea is to show through these images the beauty of diversity in creation and how such natural setting becomes for us in the Catholic school more than the laws of the Ministry of Education, a model of how to order our schools to reflect the beauty of diversity among peoples which is already present in creation” (CIV, interview 12 April, 2015). The strength of this resource is the consistency of this message with other aspects of the school culture formation. This is particularly related to protocol 2.5-2.6 of the Equity and Inclusive Education (CEIE) strategy of the board which states that the Graduate Expectation framework should be used in such a way as to help “establish a collaborative culture where the collective capabilities and voices of all stakeholders are used to develop and implement equity and inclusive education goals; promote equity minded student leadership related to issues of social justice.”

As one of the writers of this document, JC1 pointed out in an interview, “The Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations have contributed in various ways to being a shining light for Catholic schools since 1998. They have served as a lens for Catholic educators who continually seek to discern and interpret the signs of the times. They have informed our collective efforts to respond to the challenges of our world in a distinctively Christian manner in order to serve our students and their families” (JC1, 18 April, 2015). The Graduate Expectation is ubiquitous in all the classrooms, in the common rooms, in the gym, in the chapel, in restaurants and in most textbooks being used by the teachers and students, which I examined. Each expectation is cast in a culturally specific painting reflecting the diversity of Canada. Most students and teachers know it off by heart.

The only limitation of this document which I observed is that it contains a broad set

of aspirations and hopeful vision about what the students will realise at the end of their schooling in the Catholic high school. It is hoped that these expectations should permeate all aspects of the school culture, but it is still heavily theoretical. There is also no clarity in the minds of teachers about which aspects of diversity and multicultural education is the goal of particular Graduate Expectation. Thus how to align the daily practices to these expectations remains a daunting task for teachers. This is particularly evident as they deal with the critical issues in the school culture which will lead to that goal—integration model versus assimilation model; separation or segregation or marginalisation models. This lack of clarity about the goal to be achieved and how that could be realised in practice in the school is so evident in the response of the teachers, showing that that text of the school culture is yet to be understood and assimilated by all stakeholders.

The third video which I watched in the course of my visit was *The Enduring Gift: Catholic Education in the Province of Ontario*. This is a resource produced by Ontario Catholic Supervisory Officers' Association in association with Salt and Light Catholic

Television network. The author of the video is renowned Canadian historian and professor of history at the University of Toronto, Mark McGowan working in collaboration with all the school boards in Ontario and five selected schools. The producers pointed out the objective for producing this documentary; "Ontario's Catholic schools are a testament to the commitment and leadership of previous generations. *The Enduring Gift* will help a new era know their story and proudly identify with the legacy of Catholic Education. The gift is now in their hands" (*The Enduring Gift*, back cover comment). The history told in this documentary is that the fight for equitable funding between Catholic schools and public schools in Ontario lasted for more than a century. It is a fight which began in 1867 with the signing of the British North American Act (BNA) when the Protestant majority in the then Upper Canada (now Ontario) were locked in a battle with Catholics for the right of

Catholics for a separate school system. By 1985, with the passage of Bill 30, full funding of Catholic education from early childhood, primary and grade 13 of high school was passed into law and survived various legal challenges up to the Supreme Court of Canada in 1987. In 1998, the Franco-Ontarian Catholic schools were also given full funding by the passage of Bill 109 in the same year. It was a pyrrhic victory which has continued to generate tension and uncertainty as to the nature and distinctiveness of Catholic education vis-à-vis the requirements of the Ministry of Education. But the main reason why this history is introduced to students in high school as a way of helping to build an inclusive school culture is quite illuminating: Catholic schools having been through a century of struggle to win the right to education for Catholics who were a minority in the province of Ontario, are best suited to promote equity education.

The other three resources used for creating an inclusive school culture which constitute the context for the diversity and multicultural education in Community of the Beloved are resource books of activities. These resources which I observed are guides for Community of the Beloved in creating their ten steps for inclusion proposed, namely: assistance, communication, inclusion, listening and participation; remediation, resilience, understanding, unity and welcoming community. The programmes were developed from a province-wide study which identified seven best schools in Ontario in creating inclusive school cultures. The board sought to know what these schools were doing in order to produce the results which were so important in creating an inclusive culture. The findings and best practices for inclusion are contained in the resource by the Elementary Teacher' Federation of Ontario's workbook; *Poverty and Schools in Ontario: How Seven Elementary Schools are Working to Improve Education*. Whereas the research was carried out in primary schools, some of the proposals in this innovative book helped to shape the five steps and ten practices for inclusive culture used by Catholic board's high schools including Community of the Beloved. The goal of this innovative resource as Ben Levin, of Ontario Institute for Studies in Education noted is that, "the examples, stories, and

ideas in this book provide much food for thought for everyone wanting a school system that truly treats all children as deserving good education, no matter their background” (Parker & Flessa, 2011: 10). Some of the foundations on which the programmes of Community of the Beloved and the board are built draws from this book which includes the following practices:

- i) The reliance on heroic individual teachers or principals to improve schools and create an inclusive school culture is neither sustainable nor feasible hence the need for greater outreach to the wider communities and connections among all the stakeholders and building an inclusive school community as an intentional effort by all.
- ii) An entrepreneurial heroes approach is neither a sustainable model for system-wide school improvement in terms of school culture and in order to make possible students success while closing the educational achievement gap between the White students and minorities.
- iii) Teacher education and qualification for realising the goal of the board or the ministry of education will require more than simply enunciating principles and policies rather adapting practices to meet specific social issues which affect students’ success.
- iv) Creating a school culture will require activities in the school which does the following: (a) focus on character development for students; (b) building a collaborative environment among teachers; (c) making connections between teachers and families and ongoing parental engagement; (e) understanding and adapting to each student’s need and a subject-centered teaching and learning; (f) developing through activities an open concept school by creating a healthy and open space and place for teaching and learning by students and teachers; (d) building the whole community of the school; (e) collaborative and collective responsibility of all stakeholders; (f) community partnership and engagement; (g) mentoring and coaching of students.

The following resources provide the theoretical and practical explanation of how to

bring these best practices to bear on all schools in the Catholic Board, especially the *Equity Continuum* a resource provided to me by the principal of Community of the Beloved who noted that the resource aims at improving 'everyday micro-practices to the macro-practices that privilege some and marginalise others' (*Equity Continuum: Action and Critical Transformation in Schools and Classrooms*, 2012: 7). This tools' book is aligned in terms of theoretical underpinnings and concrete practical action with the Board's *Learning Improvement Plan K-12, 2014-2018*.

Furthermore, this resource serves as 'a to-do-list' of all the 8 dimensions of creating an inclusive culture proposed and accepted as central to the board's mission and applied in Community of the Beloved school namely; ongoing learning and assessment of learning outcomes through equity and diversity audits (teachers use the activities book, *Using Equity Audits to Create an Excellent Schools*); to recognise and honour diversity in our schools, classrooms, communities, province and nation; to identify thorough group activities by students/teachers barriers to opportunity and access within our schools, for students, staff, parents or guardians and community members (Community of the Beloved teachers in religious education and civic use Karen Murray and Nicole West-Burns (2011) *Educator's Equity Workbooks*, 2nd Edition); improving school culture and classroom climate by giving the students a voice and encouraging student leadership in both school and classroom; and finally support for school planning and implementation of the strategy (Murray & West-Burns, 2011: 10).

In order to achieve this, I noticed that Community of the Beloved High school has many of the so called 'equity look-fors' like different bulletin boards and display cases representing issues of social justice; resources and materials (in the school libraries, book rooms in offices) representing issues of social justice, paintings and pictures from many of the students' social work from their field trips to Africa, Dominican Republic, Haiti etc, equity days, or heritage month art works displayed in the halls demonstrate critical thinking, diversity and multicultural ideas and celebrations on issues of equity and social action. I saw numerous posters, displays;

signage in the school conspicuously displayed which immediately connect any visitor or student to the bigger picture that Community of the Beloved is a school where all are welcome.

The other two foundational workbooks for teachers which they use in creating a school culture which follows the ten activities for realising an inclusive culture are the *Creating Safe Schools: A Bullying Prevention Guide for Teachers* and *Engaging Students with Poverty in Mind: Practical Strategies for Raising Achievement*. Both books propose practices and activities which can foster a culture of kindness, caring, courage and compassion in the classroom and in the school environment. The fundamental problem identified for high dropout rate of students of color compared to middle income White students is poverty. However, for students who self-identify as gay the fundamental challenge is bullying and intolerance which they experience in school. As Jensen (2013:1) in the activities book used in Community of the Beloved *Engaging Students with Poverty in Mind* points out:

There is not a failure within the students. There are no poor students with deficits; there are only broken schools that need fixing. There are no failing students; there are only schools that are failing our students. There are no unmotivated students; there are only teachers whose classrooms are fright-fully boring, uncaring, or irrelevant. Such classrooms fail to engage students enough to be able to meet their needs.

PJT, the principal of Community of the Beloved was one of the authors of the *Ten Opportunities Manual* which helps teachers develop ten practical steps for creating an inclusive school culture through realising the Board Student Learning Improvement Plan (SLIP)—increasing student engagement, reducing the learning opportunity gap, nurturing a Catholic community and student learning. In section 4.3.1 I present the narrative of individual teachers and focus groups on how these proposed programmes are actually being implemented in Community of the Beloved.

The documentary resources so far presented constitute the context for creating an inclusive school culture which is the concern of this research in terms of diversity

and multicultural education. They are the sources and guide for teachers because they are what the school board in collaboration with different teachers unions and professional organisations, and in fidelity to the Ministry of Education's equity strategy and the social teaching of the church, has formulated as a guide to daily school practices. It is around these resources that the research instruments were designed. In order to understand the challenges and opportunities of equity and diversity education in Community of the Beloved school in the context of the CEIE, one has to interpret how the teachers understand the meaning of the central phenomenon under inquiry; how they understand and apply the strategy for inclusion, and how they understand and apply the resources provided. What I have done so far is to explore the claims of the resources and their objectives. I have not undertaken a detailed critical study of these documents since it is not the main goal of this research. However, the theoretical framework of this thesis is critical and conflictual which interrogates the school culture and the actors in the system with regard to the contending issues between dominant mainstream Catholic and White culture and the downstream marginal cultures of African-Canadian students, migrants, and LGBTQ. What follows in the next section is a presentation and analysis of how the teachers and school administrators understand, interpret and apply these resources and tools at Community of the Beloved school in creating a school culture.

4.3 Interview responses on the meaning of diversity and multicultural education

Twenty respondents were asked to explain what they understand by diversity and multicultural education and how it is being implemented at Community of the Beloved. The first point noted in individual interviews and focus group discussion is the absence of a common understanding and interpretation of the meaning, goal and nature of diversity and multicultural education. There are broadly speaking three types of understanding which the respondents gave to me in the conversation which shows the absence of a depth understanding of the issues involved in diversity and multicultural education. The first is the neutral perspective on what it means and the preference for individualized approach based on the interest of teachers. The second

is the very positive and enthusiastic perspective which points to a common vision and programme for creating a distinctive Community of the Beloved inclusive school culture. The third is the position of those teachers who had an unclear perspective on what is involved in dealing with the challenges and opportunities of diversity and equity education. As Terrell and Lindsey (2009) point out in the key texts for the formation of teachers in this board in creating an inclusive school environment, teachers ought to be able to answer the following questions in order to be in touch with the equity issues in their school:

How much do you know about equity issues in your school or in schools throughout the country? To what extent are historical events of inequity present in our school today? Are students in your school well served by the academic and co-curricular programs? (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009: 11).

Cultural proficiency is a prerequisite for creating an inclusive school culture because it gives the teachers the skills to manage diversity based on the cultural knowledge of the values of the different cultural backgrounds and social contexts of their students (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009: 21). This is why it is important for educators to have an adequate understanding of this key aspect of education. This is why finding the adequacy of the understanding is important for this research.

The group who were neutral (five teachers/respondents) define diversity and multicultural education in a very broad way, which does not reflect any clarity of both content and context of diversity and multicultural education. Teachers in this group do not show any depth understanding of the equity issues or depth understanding of cultural or social issues which inform the need for the creation of an inclusive school culture. According to one teacher at Community of the Beloved Catholic High School:

I don't know. I don't think I have any understanding. I just think everybody should be... should have access to education regardless of their ethnic background, gender, etc, etc... It's that simple (CN1, interview conducted January 6, 2015).

Another teacher (CN2), who is an expert in religious education, in response to this question, argued that there should be no single definition to diversity and multicultural education. This, according to him, is because each country has its own unique understanding of the key questions and issues which schools are dealing with in this area of sociology of education. He argues further:

The term culture does not lend itself to a single definition. Therefore, one cannot give a common or generally accepted definition of multicultural education. Each school working with the school board must come up with their own definition or common practices which could shape their specific narrative of diversity and multicultural education. Multiculturalism in its simplest form would be people coming from different countries. Right? But when you go deeper than that, there are so many other cultures that we talk about, like you know, musical culture. There are kids who follow specific genres of music and the trends and the slang and everything that is associated with it. There's that culture as well. I guess when I talk about multiculturalism would just basically be a set of views and norms that a group of people follow no matter where they come from whether it be a country, religion, music, style, whatever the case may be (CN2, interview 15 December, 2014).

Based on responses received, there are sixteen of the teachers/respondent who adopt a positive and enthusiastic understanding of multiculturalism. They do not have clarity about its definition but rather adopt a descriptive approach to explaining what they believe goes on in their school. A good representative account of this is the perspective of another teacher in Community of the Beloved Catholic High School who answered the question in terms of what goes on in the school this way:

Well, this is a little tough. I feel that multicultural education is all about respect. It's not so much categorizing and it's not so much separating. I'm Irish and white, and your German and your Jamaican. We all have the same goals in terms of social justice and becoming educated and growing as a

group and I try and instill that in my kids – this isn't the Sri Lankan corner and we are not separated but we are like Cardinal Community of the Beloved One Community festival. We are one. Even in that festival, when we have the Filipino dance, half the participants aren't Filipino because they want to share their culture and enrich other people by sharing their culture. It's not divisive. It's more communal. (CN3, interview 15 December, 2014).

I also observed from seven respondents that some teachers (7) are unsure of what multiculturalism is. This lack of understanding gives them considerable angst with regard to how to implement the strategy being proposed in the school and/or the Catholic school. Some of the respondents who were unsure of what multiculturalism means thought of CEIE as all having to do with the class curriculum and how to make their teaching more accessible to the students' experience, as CN6 noted in the interview:

Multiculturalism is all about the curriculum. In terms of the curriculum, what I teach a lot, a lot of human rights stuff, there's a lot of stuff within the curriculum that covers a lot of areas of multicultural education, looks at protection of human rights, minority rights and looks at the charter of rights and freedoms of Canada and how it protects individual rights for all groups including ethnic, sexual orientation, male/female – it covers pretty much everything there. It's all covered in the curriculum. In terms of what I do, that's how it's covered for me and I follow the curriculum (CN6, interview 8 December, 2014).

Some positions verge from assimilation into the dominant culture by minorities, to respect for and accommodation of the culture of the immigrant community. However, what this means in terms of acceptance of others, adaptive and implementive skills are not fully clarified by the teachers in this group. But underlying this perspective is the often challenging question which persists in creating an inclusive culture: Why are they not like us? This also raises the question of how to bridge the gap between the 'us' and the 'them' syndrome prevalent in

equity and diversity issues in schools. In creating an inclusive school culture, who is doing the inclusion? As one teacher (CN5), noted including all students is an essential part of being a leader in the educational setting by being proactive in both pedagogy and social relationship. According to her, “the way I interpret it is that I would like to include as much as I can, include every kid that I can. From using examples, I use examples from a number of places” (CN5, interview 16, December, 2014). But creating an inclusive school culture is not simply an educational strategy to be left to the whims and caprices of teachers. According to another teacher who is a consultant to the Catholic school on equity and diversity, “at the heart of the challenge facing Catholic education in Ontario is the question of poverty and suffering which define the social condition of students who belong to the minority group” (TDC1, December 16, 2014). According to her, diversity and multicultural education is all about Gospel values, “Matthew’s Gospel on whatsoever you do to the least of the brethren” (TDC1). The least of the brethren, according to her, are the children who come from poor neighborhoods and from the low-income group. She noted that she came to a new realisation of this meaning of diversity because she was sent to Texas with a few other teachers in the pilot programme for equipping teachers in the board for an inclusive education and came back with tools for creating an inclusive school culture.

It was during this trip and training in Texas that she realised that she was ill-equipped for delivering the curriculum or mentoring other teachers as a board consultant on equity and diversity. TDC1 argues strongly that to be able to understand issues about equity, diversity and multiculturalism, one needs to be trained because student achievement which is the goal of all inclusive educational strategy is not something that should be left to the preference of individual teacher. Because many teachers in the board and in the schools have not undertaken the kind of formalised training and additional qualification (AQ) which she got, they are incapable of grappling with the complex issues of equity and diversity nor are they able to define what it is. The other colleague (TDC2) with whom she undertook this additional training and who directs the social justice work at the board, shows a

deeper understanding of issues of equity, diversity and multicultural education. He represents a very positive, adequate and enthusiastic perspective on this central phenomenon at the board level. When asked what is diversity and multicultural education he said:

Equity and diversity in Catholic education refers to how we meet the individual needs of our students while working together as a community of learners. It means that every student should not get the same thing. You have to address the needs of each person. From the Catholic perspective the needs are social, spiritual etc; they are not separate component but one flows from another. It is one that has in Catholic education the deep meaning of who you are and who your community is. If all our students are the same, then there is something significant going wrong. Like any organism our school community is diverse. We want to celebrate the ecology of diversity, subsidiarity, and participation that allows the expression of community, people's identity, how they self-identify as opposed to imposing an identity on people (TDC2, 14 December, 2014).

The idea of community and participation was central in the way that 16 of the teacher respondents who had a positive and adequate perspective on equity and diversity understand and interpret it. But the rest of the teachers belong to the other two groups, those who are neutral about what it means or negative about the confusion of terms, concepts, programs and strategy. Community and participation are especially significant given the fact that there is a clear, consistent strategy for realising an accepting school framework in Ontario which will enhance students' success especially for those who are historically marginalised.

The absence of a clear and consistent understanding of equity and diversity by teachers and administrators is also surprising given that the Catholic school had conducted a survey of teachers in 2011 under the title "Catholic equity and inclusive education" in an attempt to find out the comfort zone of teachers and administrators

which led to the development of the Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education (CEIE) resources which were currently in use. The result of this survey led to the development of the board-wide strategy which aims among others: to help teachers support students success through realising the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations; to use culturally relevant pedagogy, to make effective use of the social justice committees at all schools as the flag ship of the implementation of the board-wide strategy aimed at meeting the requirements of the Ministry of Education. In addition, the resources provided for the teachers were aimed to give them a clear and consistent understanding of the EIE and CEIE as well as promote accountability and transparency in the implementation of the strategies of the ministry of education (EIE), and Catholic board (CEIE). Both strategies aim at creating a healthy school culture that is free from discrimination and harassment through shared and committed leadership and a greater relationship between the school and the neighborhood and the demographics which each school serves (Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education CEIE, Survey Recommendations, 2011)

As one of the members of the religious education team of Community of the Beloved noted, it is hard to follow a strategy when you do not understand the ‘what’ of the strategy. He noted that most teachers are relying on ‘the gut feeling’ in determining how to ‘customise’ some of the board’s guidelines, programmes, and practices in areas like inclusive curriculum and assessment practices, professional development to develop cultural proficiency, religious and racial accommodation, attitude to students of colour and students who self-identify as LGBTQ. In this regard, he offered this definition of what takes place in multicultural education which reinforces the notion that there is no clarity of understanding of this central phenomenon at least in the minds of teachers and their daily practices. According to him, it is left to each teacher to determine how this can be realised in the school:

I guess I would say multicultural education is where the population, the immigrant population in Toronto per se is respected, is honoured but at the same time they... but also they have a responsibility to the country they

immigrated to (CN4, interview 12 December, 2014).

The same point of view was particularly significant in focus group (FGTA) of seven chaplains and religious education experts. They all admitted that there is a passion for equity and diversity in the school board and especially in Community of the Beloved Catholic High school. However, without any clear understanding of what equity and diversity involves, its meaning, context and goal, many teachers are picking and choosing what aspects of the board's guidelines, programmes and practices which is of interest to them. This is an advantage on one hand because it makes each teacher to pursue and implement what he or she is passionate about. On the other hand, it presents some significant challenges because one teacher's passion alone cannot create a school culture especially if the teacher is not in an administrative position.

Furthermore, FGTA identified that some of the practices for inclusion in the schools create fragmentation in the system without a consistent pattern and is potentially a source of conflict among teachers and between them and administrators who may have a different agenda about inclusivity in the school. Because most of the participants in this focus group (FGTA) are chaplains and religious education experts they could point out easily to how some aspects of Catholic social theory like human dignity, community, solidarity, option for the poor and vulnerable, participation, align with fundamental goals of the CEIE. However, one of them said, "Everybody has a passion when it comes to diversity; in order to find a common ground there has to be a lot of dialogue" (FGTA1, focus group interview, 18 December, 2014). Another participant wondered out loud in the conversation, "Everybody wants to get to the same place and has to get there differently, but how can we have a common school culture and a common strategy and program on equity if everyone is doing their own thing?" (FGTA2, interview, 18 December, 2014). Another participant drilled in the point in a most poignant manner when she said:

Individual interests cannot bring us to realising the EIE strategy of the

ministry or the CEIE of the Catholic school. You see when you meet black teachers they are strongly fighting for right of Black students without giving attention to other equity issues in the school as if to say racism is the sole goal of EIE. When you meet teachers who have different sexual orientation they are championing the interest of LGBTQ students. This is at the High school level where these issues are central to the identity of adolescents. So tell me, how do you respect the beliefs and traditions of non-Catholic students in our school? How do you have people put aside their own bias and racism with dealing with people of other cultures? The main issue is that there is a lack of knowledge from educators and colleagues who are not well versed about other faith, other race, and other social conditions and about what is diversity. The challenge is human resources; the educators are biased and lacking in so many ways; everybody has got interest (FGTA3, interview, 18 December, 2014).

The conclusion I drew from the stories of the teachers can be summarised as follows. Firstly, whereas there are numerous resources on diversity and multicultural education, most of them feel that the board and the school have not equipped them with enough resources and formation to understand the EIE and the CEIE. Secondly, most of them feel that their inadequate understanding of the meaning of diversity and multicultural education and the strategies of both the EIE and the CEIE is not out of lack of interest in such issues but rather because this is a new area of education, pedagogy and school effectiveness framework. Many are optimistic that it will need time to be drilled into the teachers and the structures of the school. Thirdly, those who have an adequate and enthusiastic understanding of the strategy are either those who have been sent to training or those who got additional qualification (AQ) on equity and diversity education and how to create an inclusive culture by either the board or Community of the Beloved. Fourthly, the institutional framework for the implementation of the strategy in particular school is not yet in place and there is no serious accounting taking place for evaluating how schools are implementing the strategy and the adequacy of the understanding of the teachers. There was no follow-up to the 2011 survey to assess how the resources are being used to improve

understanding and practice on the part of the teachers.

Fifthly, many of the teachers who have a negative understanding or perception of EIE or CEIE see it as another stressful program to be added to an already heavy work load. In addition, the board has not found the best way to evaluate the implementation of the EIE and the CEIE because the board is being careful not to impose or enforce a regulatory regimen about them which could trigger a strike by the Union of teachers. Sixthly, I found out that those teachers who are very enthusiastic about multicultural and diversity education and who display a depth understanding often spoke in terms of their experiential learning and personal interest developed from travelling to Asia or Africa, working with minorities in Scarborough or having a family member who self-identifies as LGBTQ. Seventhly, many of the teachers have not read the resources and in the conversation only five respondents made any reference to the resources provided by the board in their definition of diversity and multicultural education. One can then conclude that even for those who gain adequate and depth insight on equity and diversity and multicultural education, it might be the result of personal interest rather than the result of a deliberate immersion through board or school workshops and in-set training. The position of one of the priest chaplains (PC1) who works for the board and for high schools such as Community of the Beloved, provides a fitting summary of the situation outlined above:

Diversity and equity education is a very confusing area for all of us both teachers and administrators. You cannot correct the systemic racism and prejudice against minorities in the GTA simply by enunciating and authoring equity and inclusivity strategy. Most of our teachers are incompetent in this area because they neither understand Catholic Social Teaching nor the requirements of the Province's equity and inclusivity education. In addition, educational reform has to be comprehensive and integrated not mere tokenism; it needs to be thought through not simply knee-jerk reaction. All of us are struggling with this whole thing because many think that it is all about developing occasional programs, having a day or two as service day to visit

homeless shelters or to do a food drive; some others think it is all about having a day to celebrate Black students or students who self-identify as LGBTQ. The lack of clarity of what is involved in CEIE and EIE is a reflection of a deeper crisis which is not being touched by our board (PC1, interviewed 19 December, 2014).

4.4 School strategies and programmes for faith-based diversity and multicultural education

The presentation and analysis of the answers respondents gave to the question on what strategies they adopted for diversity and multicultural education, and which ones are helpful or unhelpful could be broadly grouped into two, i.e. the responses given by individual teachers and the discussion with the two focus groups. Thirty-two respondents answered the question, while seven skipped it. Only five answered the question on which aspects was either helpful or unhelpful.

The responses follow a similar trend with the response to the question on the meaning of diversity and multicultural education, but for the sake of analysis I have grouped the answers into effective and non-effective strategy. This question was addressed only to teachers at Community of the Beloved and the two focus groups at the school. There is a consensus among respondents that Community of the Beloved is in the forefront in the implementation of the EIE and CEIE of the board. However, there are some teachers who point to a very important activity which they do which upon consideration may be helping to create an inclusive school culture but which they could not clearly articulate as to how it is inspired and sustained by the CEIE or/and the EIE.

There is thus from my observation and the narrative of teachers at Community of the Beloved, no correlation between the lack of proper formation on equity and diversity

education on the part of the teachers and the adequacy or inadequacy of their strategies. But this does not mean that there is no need for adequate formation on this new pathway for educational reform. What it shows, which is significant in the narrative of the teachers, is that one may have a clarity about the Board's CEIE strategy and lack the will and the adaptive skills to bring it about through daily school activities and practices. On the other hand, one may not have an adequate understanding of equity and diversity strategy in the CEIE, but have a particular interest in school improvement and students' achievement with openness to adapting to the needs of the school and the students and can thus strike a workable practice which promotes equitable learning environment and nurturing school culture for students, parents and community. However, bringing both the theoretical and the practical is a needed step which the teachers identify.

The strategy for realising an inclusive school culture at the level of daily practices at Community of the Beloved centres around three organs, i.e. (1) the Social Justice team of Community of the Beloved (2) the Community of the Beloved School Council and (3) students success/leadership committees. These groups overlap in terms of membership. The principal, vice principal, head of the curriculum committee, school chaplain, parent head of the school council are members of the three groups. These are the main channels for forming the minds of students and engaging them in daily practices which promote inclusion in the school. Below is the design of the diagrammatic representation of the mission and goal of the social justice committee in the light of the overall goal of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (2012-2015) for the realisation of the Graduate Expectations.



Figure 4.1: Catholic School Multi-Year Strategic Plan: Living Out Our Values

The following are the objectives and goals of the school boards multi-year strategic plan:

- a. Fostering Students Achievement and Wellbeing: To support our students in meeting the Ontario Graduate School Expectation.
- b. Strengthening Public Confidence: To create enhanced, regular communications with all stakeholders.
- c. Providing Stewardship of Resources: To establish integrated decision-making structures to support responsive and responsible allocation of resources.
- d. Inspiring and Motivating Employees: To create learning and work environment that is equitable and diverse, that supports professional learning, innovation and collaboration.
- e. Achieving Excellence in Governance: To lead and model best practices in board governance.

According to the Manual of the Community of the Beloved school, the School Social Justice Committee is built around this rationale of closing the learning and opportunity gap:

The manifestations of this gap maybe found in the mind, body and spirit. Further the gap involves those assets or lack of assets a student brings to the learning process.

This includes those factors that create the environmental condition for a readiness to learn and those factors that have a direct bearing on the learning process. For example, if a student's body is not nourished or if their housing situation is unstable their readiness to learn is impaired. That student has less opportunity to learn. Alternatively, if a student has not developed the skill of self-regulation it is difficult to learn. Likewise if a student has not had the opportunity to learn to pray or discern then soul may become impoverished (Draft Design of the Social Justice Closing the Learning Opportunity Goal, 2014).

In the interview which I had with the principal, PJT(December, 17, 2014), she noted that all the activities and strategies for creating an inclusive school culture at Community of the Beloved revolve around the main mission of the school. This school, she pointed out, is committed to making a difference in the lives of the students by creating a community in which the unique gift of every student is celebrated in order to enable every student to develop into a whole person—intellectually, physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. She sees an inclusive environment in the school as one in which all programmes and activities are directed towards making the students to grow in faith and truth, to embrace the life of Jesus and commit themselves to a life of service. PJT narrates further that at Community of the Beloved:

Our faith inspires us to show what it means to be human; to show compassion towards others and part of that is that we all are created equal to one another. Equity and diversity is celebrated in our school because everybody needs to be given something different in order to have a good amount of success because our students differ. We cannot apply one rule fits all here. It is as if three people with unequal height wish to scale a wall, the steps will be different but you want each to come to a certain height where they can see. There are some teachers who ask me why we spend so much time on equity and diversity activities in the school and I tell them because I see this as an opportunity. Something I learnt that a teacher told me that a lot of students complain when some students get special treatment. But I reply

that being fair to every student means given them what they need to succeed as long as everyone succeeds that's what matters (PJT, Interview 17 December, 2014).

The principal's view is representative of and sets the tone of what I consider an effective approach, because it shows both understanding of what diversity and multicultural education is and a good strategy for implementing the strategy. One of the heads of the religious department, CN25, corroborated what the principal said. She narrated that at Community of the Beloved they do not simply translate hook, line and sinker all the instructions from the board, rather they try to be creative. According to her, until few years back in most Catholic high schools in Ontario the only way they showed diversity, especially when it comes to religions, is through the teaching of world religions. Teachers, she noted, saw ecumenical openness of the church to the religious 'other' as the most valid way of being inclusive. But for her there is a change beyond religious diversity into celebrating cultural diversity and diversity in the history and evolution of Canadian society especially the diverse histories and contexts of minorities and people of colour. At Community of the Beloved, then, she sees this in display:

Well, certainly when I taught in the History department, it's the understanding of bringing in events in Canada and people and profiling issues and others, they come from diverse backgrounds. Textbooks – I have certainly been around for almost 30 years now - textbooks are beginning to reflect that reality. That's certainly something we have seen from the Ministry level. But at Community of the Beloved we do not teach diversity and multiculturalism, we live it we celebrate it. I think one of the biggest celebrations here at Community of the Beloved is One Community (CN 25, 10 December, 2014).

Another teacher at Community of the Beloved (CN19), who identified himself as equity and diversity educator, said that the diversity and inclusive school culture of Community of the Beloved shows that the Catholic board is coming full circle with regard to sexual orientation. This is why despite opposition from the highest Catholic

leader in the area, Cardinal Collins against the *Accepting Schools Bill*, the school board and Community of the Beloved are pushing ahead. Some of the programmes and activities which Community of the Beloved embraces include, according to CN19, the non-bullying week, and creating a space for students who self-identify as LGBTQ, where they could gather and share ideas and feel a sense of comfort, safety and develop friendships. CN19 spoke further on this matter:

For our Anti-Bullying week former students and speakers come in. This isn't board level, but the board would support it though Community of the Beloved is known to function outside of the box. The board has the inclusivity and diversity meetings once a month or very so often. Community of the Beloved is way ahead of this game in terms of what they were promoting. Having guest speakers in is something Community of the Beloved is doing more often. We have also been going to the movies or plays that are Black -oriented or focused (CN 19, Interview on 10 December, 2014).

There are thirty-two teachers who answered this question of which seven were unsure of what strategies the school is using. Take the example of one of the teachers in the special education department (CN20). She was not quite sure which of the programmes really worked well in the school because she was not part of the social justice committee. In response to the question she said:

On strategy we use here or developed by the board on diversity and multicultural education? No, to tell you the truth, I can't think of anything. I know our school does many stuff on this. Is there a question later about what the school does? Because it's One Community. Umm... I'm sure the board does it but I can't think of specific strategies, no not sure (CN 20, 10 December, 2014).

CN20 represents the perspectives of those teachers (seven out of twenty-one who answered this question) who are unsure and the usual response they gave is that they are not part of the team on diversity and multiculturalism, thus giving me the

impression that they think of diversity and multicultural education as some kind of specialised education or extracurricular activity.

However, this does not mean that they are not involved in developing and implementing strategies already framed into the school programme. An example of this is the response of an educational consultant in one of the specialised departments at Community of the Beloved (CNH). He told me that his job is to help students who enter high school in grade 8 to “find support emotionally and financially and to help kids who are experiencing any form of emotional, social and behavioral issues which might prevent students’ success” (CNH, interview 13 April, 2015). However, he pointed out that some of the programmes which they develop are not institutionalised in the school. A good example is what he calls the school’s “underground gay support group’ which exists because it is not called Gay Straight Alliance (GSA), as is the case in the public school” (CNH, interview, 13 April, 2015). He showed me a slew of documents which they use for supporting students including the required ‘elementary school principal/teacher Exchange of Information Form for new students moving from elementary school to high school or those transferring from one high school to Community of the Beloved. This form gives a detailed history of all new students including the following information (attendance/punctuality, homework completion, general learning skills, co- curricular activities, social relationship, Education Quality, Accountability and Equal Learning Opportunity (EQAO) testing results and student success levels which helps the new school to determine the new students’ good achievement level in areas as EQAO numeracy and OSSLT literacy strategies etc). This consultant noted that they do this in order to overcome the limitations of transmission-oriented curriculum and impersonal factory-model schools.

Five broad approaches and strategies for inclusion are adopted in Community of the Beloved, according to him based, on this entry assessment, namely; (a) discover the challenges facing each student which might impede learning success and holistic

development in the school; (b) determine the kind of personalised interventions to adopt without unduly resorting to punishing infractions from the students; (c) make necessary accommodations and modifications in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) of Ontario to support the student in question; (d) determine whether the school culture is suitable to this particular student before admitting him or her; (e) determine the kind of classroom and the specialised skills which might determine the teachers who will work with this particular students. Citing from a note CNH said:

If we, as a staff, maintain and increase our practice of maximizing student engagement through the use of high yield strategies communicated through local co-learning professional development opportunities, then existing high levels of student engagement will impact our credit accumulation rate, EQAO testing results and student success (CNH, interview 13 April, 2013).

He pointed out that this approach is working even though he may not fully articulate it as equity and multiculturalism or which aspect particularly has been most helpful or unhelpful. As to the question why he thinks that they are following the best practices in this area, he pointed to the fact that students from Community of the Beloved are consistently out-performing their peers in students' retention and increased graduation rate. Furthermore, he said that the adoption of regular protocols to get the feedback from students every other year in such key areas as Individual Pathway Plan (IPP), Creating Pathway to Success, Student Cohort programme, My School My Voice, and Grade Nine Surveys, shows an above average rate of student success and satisfaction with the overall school culture. Even though he agrees that these surveys and feedbacks are not scientific in terms of weighting it with other variables which bring success, he insists that the narrative from the students and the results from the diploma examinations on completion of the high school and the specific self-regulated skills acquisition of students which are so evident are too consistent as to deny their weight in determining why Community of the Beloved was recommended to me as the model high school by the board.

Another educator (CNA2) at Community of the Beloved agrees with CNH that many

of the administrative staff at Community of the Beloved may not have taken specialisation courses on equity and diversity education but through constant meeting, training and workshop at Community of the Beloved every educator is aware of the mission of the school and how to bring about an inclusive culture. She said:

What is challenging is not the absence of materials and resources. We have so many resources here in the library available to teachers. I am not sure most of them will read them, but loving people or making them feel welcome and realizing Maslow's goals is not hard. I think what is lacking is the 'how to' aspect of it. This is what we provide here at Community of the Beloved; not theories of diversity and multiculturalism, but an educational praxis that makes successful learning possible through an inclusive culture (CNA2, interview 13 April, 2015).

She showed me the project plan used for training students in leadership position and social justice in February 2014. According to her, the strategy at Community of the Beloved is to use diverse stories to convey to the students the dignity of differences and why accepting each other matters as a way of avoiding the tragedies of history. This is how Community of the Beloved work project for the week of 2-9 November 2014, which went out to all students articulated for the students what the week is all about:

Holocaust Education Week honors the memories of those who suffered unthinkable atrocities during the Shoah by listening to the stories of those who survived the state-sponsored, large-scale, systematic killings in Nazi Germany. Through their voices, we to understand what motivated those people to behave as they did and how the targets of these attacks responded to the Nazi persecutions and strategies they were forced to develop in their quest to survive. By learning about the horrors of the concentration and death camps and discovering the known and unknown heroes of the Holocaust through presentations, films, and workshops, it is our attempt to fight against ignorance with education and to fight disbelief with proof. We hope that students will discover some insights that help them think about suffering in our own world and to continue to fight against ignorance and bigotry—to remember and to never forget (Learning, Student Achievement and Well-Being).

The two focus group discussions gave me a detailed account and insight into how the strategies for diversity and multiculturalism actually work at Community of the Beloved. I turn to highlighting key aspects of these especially as they are constantly reported or reinforced consistently by the other 21 teachers who have very positive and specific answers on these strategies.

The focus group (FGTN) (discussion took place on 15-16 December 2014) identified the following as the strategies adopted by Community of the Beloved and which are working well in the school:

- FGTN 7 (student member of focus group), “we celebrate our differences and cultures and backgrounds. Specifically we have a week when we call it One community we have a celebration of dances and food and we focus on a particular issues in Kenya, and especially in Haiti since the earthquake in 2010, we raise money, we raise money under the buy one goat campaign, that is the money is sent to Kenya so that each family who are pastoralist can buy a goat and increase their stock.” Community of the Beloved also uses the *Jambo Kenya* documentary to educate the students about Africa. Many of the students also travel to Africa for a brief period under the Kenya Leadership Program. This programme was very strong with the leadership training.
- Speakers’ series. They bring speakers who represent the diversity in the country.
- There is also a focus on the saints of the Catholic Church as models for inclusivity and love, hence, everyday is dedicated to commemorating a saint and what he or she represent for the universal church and how his or her life could be a model for building an inclusive culture at Community of the Beloved.
- Adopting cultural models from diversity groups—Black minorities, LGBTQ, Latinos and finding from these cultures how these role models can be examples for modelling an inclusive school culture at Community of the Beloved.
- Not only does Community of the Beloved invite variety of speakers especially from minority groups, during important periods such as Black History month,

speakers are brought in to speak on a variety of topics; their accomplishments; and to help students understand better the challenges of students from that particular cultural background and how they can succeed in life.

- During the Holocaust Week speakers identify their history and how people suffer and how they experience others and how students can relate with one another in the school in a respectful and sensitive manner.
- People also come to talk about mental health.
- Community of the Beloved created a sub-committee from the Social Justice Committee called Stop the Stigma Committee: Grades 9 and 10: An awareness campaign throughout the grade for students who have mental health issues to assist them (teachers and students) sometimes may need help.
- Another strategy is the Community of the Beloved Knights—teachers and students who daily make a commitment to be accepting of differences and to promote practices of openness and inclusion. The knights help to coordinate all strategies for inclusion and school culture. The emphasis of all activities in the school will be to respect human dignity both inside and outside the school living out the model of Matthew 25 on the Last Judgement, that all students should see each other as brothers and sisters because of the common fatherhood which they share in Christ.

The student leadership focus group (FTGNL) (17-18 December 2014) discussion focused on the Students Learning Opportunity Plan (SLIP), a key component of the EIE and the strategies which Neman's is using for realising an accepting school culture. One of the respondents in the focus group on student leadership (FGA1), in answering to what strategies they use in the leadership group to create an inclusive culture, said that it is important to first understand the principle which was at work in developing the strategy. According to her, the principle for developing and implementing any activities is that:

Every student in Community of the Beloved is unique and is in a different situation;

you need to give them extra tools for success. We ask them, what they need to succeed. Do you need more time, a quiet time....some students need a little bit more? At the end their success is what really matters (FGA1, focus group discussion 17 December, 2014).

In order to achieve this goal, Community of the Beloved modified the Board's School Learning Improvement Plan (SLIP) by adding two components, namely The students' voice programme and Student Pathway. According to one of the head of the group (FGA2):

Students voice came out clearly that students felt that their voice was being heard; the second area was programs and pathway students felt that we offered a wide way of programming and pathways customized to meet particular needs of all students (FGA2, focus group discussion 17 December, 2014).

Under this pathway programme, Community of the Beloved adopt what they call 'enrichment planning', which is a personalised teaching and learning through mentoring and after school programmes to support students who are struggling in class, or who are facing emotional difficulties or who feel alienated. The activities under this programme include the SHSM (specialised high skills method). In one of my school visits, I observed that the students who are in this programme received the following kind of support system in the after school programme (given extra time and peer mentor/buddy to help them successfully complete a specific academic task; students were given audio tape texts/voice to print technology as they worked. I also observed that most of the students in the after school program were African Canadian and Latinos). But besides these two groups, the focus group informed me of the following support system for students to help them succeed: there was the co-op programme which helps to give additional training and skills to students from low income family which helps them to get part time employment and summer job to augment the income from their parents. As to how they identify these students, Community of the Beloved uses the Teacher Exchange of information which I had

indicated earlier and ongoing monitoring of each student through what the focus group told me is called Individual Identification Programme, which is integrated into the regular class and in extracurricular activities especially in sports, community outreach and religious celebrations.

However, the most fundamental concern of this research is about how these programmes specifically benefit the two groups of students who have been identified as under-performing in schools in Ontario, African Canadian especially those from the Caribbean and the group of students who suffer from bullying and intolerance the LGBTQ. The focus group discussion also spent three hours on 18 December 2014 discussing how the school culture at Community of the Beloved makes it possible for the SLIP goals for 2014-2015 to be achieved especially for such groups. One black student (FGA3) summarised what she felt Community of the Beloved has done in this area of making every student feel special when she said:

I went to public school for elementary when I was a kid, my older brother begged my mum to send him to Community of the Beloved and I heard good things about Community of the Beloved and we that is me and my brother fought to come here and we fought to get out of the public and get into Community of the Beloved: This school has changed everything for me. I really wanted to be that kind of person; a friend and having an influence on other people. It is having the influence that set the school culture. We see it as having more experience and we share our knowledge; Community of the Beloved was the only choice for me as a minority student. I do not experience any discrimination here and the mentorship program has been awesome for me (FGA3, interview 18 December 2014).

Another member of the leadership team (FGA4) who is also a minority student said that what he found so helpful was the school ambassador programme. This is a programme where a student in Community of the Beloved pairs up with an

international student or a newly arrived student to the school to help him or her integrate into Community of the Beloved inclusive culture while the ambassador learns from the new student his or her background, history and culture. This way every new student begins their life at Community of the Beloved with a friend by his side. The whole idea is to make sure that no student comes to Community of the Beloved feeling like a stranger. FGA4 in his response as to the strategies for inclusion in the school that works said this:

Community of the Beloved does not need any strategy for inclusion; the school culture is the strategy which I see every day. It helped me a lot when I came here with all the challenges I face at home and in the primary school. The school is like a banquet table and all the different meals are there and students choose what is of interest for them; there is something for everyone (FGA3, interview 18 December 2014).

Principal Joan, who was also participating in the focus group noted that the school ambassadors all form part of different school teams who are involved in extracurricular activities especially targeted toward prejudice reduction. He explained further:

Our teachers and administrators attend the different training because the adult in the building had to lead, but it is important for us to know each student, understand where they come from and the challenges they have and that we all share the information as one family. Education at Community of the Beloved is not simply what happens in the class room; it is the whole school environment and it is the result of group effort. The policy of caring, being compassionate; we want our students to leave the school with the inner sense of a strong individual where social justice is key. The gift of people being able to read the actual environment and to adjust our approaches to meet the needs; reading the population and knowing the needs. We have many teams in the school which allows the students to participate in multiple activities—athletic, social justice, faith-based, social activism, travel abroad, community outreach etc (PJT, interview 18 December 2014).

These are some of the activities which the focus group (FGTNL) identified which are specific to addressing the unique presence of minorities at Community of the Beloved:

1. “As for GSA, students who self-identify as LGBTQ...we have posters that we are okay with gay and we are okay. Why would we need that because people who identify as LGBTQ feel safe. We have a safe school; other schools need a space according to the province; we already have a space. We carry it with us; the teachers make you feel safe” (FGA9, interview 18 December 2014).
2. “Lots of kids feel safe working with teachers like guidance and counsellors rather than working in a group. Having a GSA is a kind of marginalisation because the goal is to prevent homophobia. What we have at Community of the Beloved is that we needn’t have it because there are things available to people who need it. Not everyone who is bisexual. There needs to be some tangible reality where students can go to in terms of greater freedom....we need a symbolic space...if we establish GSA we invite people who are afraid to come..what we felt for not needing it; maybe we need something. Times are changing. At Community of the Beloved, the mantra on walls is that ‘it is okay to be gay’” (FGA10, interview 18 December 2014).
3. The Ambassador program which is aimed at providing a student mentor to new student migrants arriving from Asia, Caribbean, Africa, and Latin America.

The focus group on leadership identified the following faith-based approach to building an inclusive school culture at Community of the Beloved:

1. **How to be a good school 101:** the Bible is used as guide. The school is aware that teaching the Bible to the students was a key to immersing them in the priorities and practices of Christ. The group identified the perennial challenges of misinterpreting the bible or using it to justify some stereotypes against

LGBTQ for example. The bible is interpreted contextually in Community of the Beloved because they tie into the daily reflection with which the school begins the day broadcast from the principal's office to ask the question: How does the biblical passage chosen for the day affect our daily choices in the school on each particular day? I listened to one of the morning reflections and was invited to give one myself at one of my visits.

2. **Anti-bullying:** There is a zero tolerance to bullying at Community of the Beloved and codes against bullying and why students should not indulge in such practices verbally or physically are all printed in the hall ways. Community of the Beloved anti-bullying positive school culture has been recognised by the province. It won the first prize for its anti-bullying effort from the school board as well as the Toronto Argo award for its Huddle UP. Community of the Beloved maintains and sustains this high standard of positive school culture through an anti-bullying and anti-prejudice initiative according to the focus group through the following strategies: education of students through messages on the wall, in posters, constant visit of police officers in the class room to build police-student relations so that students especially minorities will feel comfortable in the presence of officers and see them as friends. There is also the police-school community relations initiative which involves monthly meeting between the youth and the kids, parents and police especially parents whose children have had troubles with the police in the past. There is also a Community of the Beloved school resource officer (police officer) who is like a big brother to the students. The Community of the Beloved anti-bullying week of activities, dance, sports, movie night, and outdoors takes place in November every year.
3. **Mass:** This is a central part of Community of the Beloved school life. The Mass is conducted once every month. I attended and officiated at the masses in November and December 2014 as a participant observer. In one of the masses on 16 December, the students re-enacted the last supper where the 12 apostles were represented by different ethnic groups and ethnic dresses. The songs

were diverse including songs in Zulu, Swahili, Tagalog, Mandarin, English, French and Italian. The various ministries in the Mass were exercised by a diversity of students including the exceptional students (formerly called students with disability), LGBTQs, parents and teachers. The gifts for the Mass included some of the non-perishable food items which the students got from their food drive which were to be distributed to the community in Scarborough which is one of the poorest neighborhoods in Toronto. The message for the Mass was on the Good Samaritans which was tied in with the equity and inclusivity message for the month of December which was on 'common good' and how students can live in such a way as to promote, preserve, and celebrate the common good of the school through incorporating the values of the month in their lives in the school.

4. **Daily prayers:** This happens every morning before classes begin and the person who is leading the prayer (the roles are divided among teachers and parents and guests speakers) will relate the prayers and short meditation to what is going on in the world and through reflecting and praying for those who are suffering connect the students to the bigger picture of the world beyond their limited horizon. I noticed also as I listened to these prayers through my daily visits that prayers are also offered for specific needs of students and students who are suffering from bereavement or whose community had a sad incident like homicide, suicide, robbery etc. PJTspeak further on the connection between this daily prayer and meditation and the Catholic faith: "What makes us Catholic? To love one another as I have loved you....our local community, the Christmas baskets, people need to be loved we cannot marginalize anybody because we are catholic. Everyone needs a sense of belonging and that is what the saints did" (Joan Tschernow, interview 12 April 2015).
5. **Extracurricular activities.** Community of the Beloved has an ongoing partnership with the National Association of Black Engineers whose members visit the school to support and mentor Black students. This group has helped

many Black students at Community of the Beloved to do well in science and maths competitions at both the provincial and national levels. They also help to create a positive school culture because according to their operating principle: “When you bring students together they bond together and learn together”.

6. **Alternative Method for Correction:** Part of the key strategy identified by the focus group is the use of alternative method for correction. At Community of the Beloved, the groups all harped on this fact, ‘we are all allowed to make mistakes....’ As one of the school chaplains put it; “we are good in working closely with students who are struggling with discipline and behavior to look at alternative method to reflect, learn and redeem themselves spiritually and being able to reintegrate into the school; it was the action and wasn’t them. We do not go by the books; we spend enormous amount of time: the caring adult model; holding the hand of the child and working them through; the safe school and Jesus: do unto others as you will wish them to do unto you” (NCI, comments in focus group discussion, 17 December 2014).
7. **Curriculum integration through Faith Days:** While this aspect is not the concern of my research the focus group also commented on how part of the Catholic faith tradition of following Jesus serves as a model for teachers so that teachers can be role models to the students. Community of the Beloved does not go by the book but every teacher is encouraged to do something good and inspirational to touch a student’s heart. This is especially emphasised through the monthly faith days when students go out to serve in the community. This is a way of implanting the seed of accepting and supporting others especially the weak and vulnerable in the minds and hearts of the students. As NCI said in the focus group discussion: “Our faith days are days for integrating the curriculum by bring the faith and learning together in daily actions. On our faith days we encourage our staff and students to go out and serve and giving back to the community; singing at the seniors home; preparing to serve food in homeless shelters; it is reflective of our community to just live our lives through simple service to the community and the poor and make everyone feel a sense of being loved; that is what creates an inclusive school culture” (NC1 comments in focus group discussion, 17 December 2014).

8. **School Teams:** Extracurricular activities for Prejudice reduction: The focus group described Community of the Beloved as being like a banquet table and all the different meals are there while each student chooses what is of interest for them because there is something for everyone. In this regard, principal PJT added this during the focus group discussion:

Our teachers and administrators attend the different training because the adult in the building had to go; share the information. Education which happens in the class room is the result of group effort. The policy of caring, being compassionate; we want our students to leave the school with the inner sense of a strong individual where social justice is key. At Community of the Beloved we have embraced the gift of people being able to read the actual environment and to adjust our approaches to meet the needs; reading the population and knowing the needs. We have many teams in the school which allows\ the students to participate in various activities namely: Christmas Basket Campaign, International Day for People with Disability, Out of the Cold, Faith Day, Scartrek among other programs both within and outside the school which are all oriented toward social justice and diversity of experience (Joan Tschernow, focus group discussion, 16 December 2014).

Other aspects of the strategies for inclusion identified by the focus group (FGTNL) include:

We respond to what is going on which is on inclusivity of which one of the participants in the discussion captured in these words:

How can we make an inclusive school culture a reality for all students especially minority Black students and LGBTQ? We respect diversity and sexual orientation issues. We have an acceptance and we don't want to marginalize people. It was one of the reasons for establishing a school's own version of GSA (Gay Straight Alliance club). It is important to have that space for where people are in their journey (FGA7, focus group discussion, 17 December 2017).

Another participants (a grade ten student) countered by saying that there is no need

for having GSA club at Community of the Beloved because beyond the posters and monthly activities, the school environment is safe for students' success making the idea of creating a safe space nugatory. She reasoned as follows:

As for GSA, our students who self-identify as LGBTQ...we have posters on walls in the hall ways and in the classrooms which says that here at Community of the Beloved that it is okay to be gay. We are okay with gay students. We do not need to create a room for gay students to meet. It is no necessary here at Community of the Beloved. Why would we need that because people who identify as LGBTQ already feel safe here. We have a safe school; other schools may need a space according to the provincial standard and board requirements; we already have a space. We carry it with us; the teachers make you feel safe; it is our school culture (FGA6, 17 December 2014).

The focus group had a consensus that at Community of the Beloved lots of kids feel safe working with teachers like guidance counsellors rather than working in a group. Having a GSA club majority in this group argued may be a kind of marginalization because the goal is to prevent homophobia which is not present at Community of the Beloved. A parent in the focus group summarised Community of the Beloved strategy of inclusion this way:

What we have at Community of the Beloved is that we needn't have a GSA club because there are all kinds of support available to people who need it. Not everyone who is bisexual or transgender needs support because some are properly integrated and adjusted. There need to be some tangible reality where students can go to in terms of greater freedom....we need a symbolic space...if we establish GSA we invite people who are afraid to come.. Here after series of consultation we felt that we did not need a club but a group support network; but there was a consensus that we needed something to support those students and that was worked out in a respectful way. Times are changing.... in the 50s they would not be comfortable with LGBTQ...They will change...our values have changed....I am happy that my kids are being taught Canadian values that it is okay for people to be LGBTQ; that diversity

is the spice of life (FGA5, focus group discussion 17 December 2014).

A fitting summary of what I learned from discussing with the focus groups on the strategies for building an inclusive school culture is how one of the parents in the focus group (FGTN) talked about the difference between Community of the Beloved approach to diversity and multiculturalism and what goes on in the public school:

What makes Community of the Beloved different is that it brings in Catholic faith in all these. Not all the teachers here are Catholics but they all embrace the values of loving your neighbor as yourself and accepting every student as a friend. This is not what happens in the public school. This is why I pulled my children from there and sent them here. In a public school you have things that speak to students academically but then what is it that speaks to them in an informal level; you can offer them different curriculum level and you have nothing to offer them spiritually. They ask what can I do not only to nurture them as mind but as soul....my soul has been fed with what can be provided within the Catholic school; they go above and beyond teachers in public school in creating a culture and receiving and forming children in the sources of faith. The Pope (that is Francis) has been different: What can I do to serve the spiritual needs for others. I have seen my children become more compassionate because of Community of the Beloved (FGP, comments in Focus group, 18 December 2014).

4.5 What are the aspects of the approaches that may be strengthened and why?

Three aspects were identified from the 18 respondents to this question and from the 2 focus groups on aspects of the CEIE which need to be strengthened at Community of the Beloved. The question was asked to find out what aspects of the CEIE or EIE programs and activities were most helpful to the students which need to be developed further. However, from the responses to this question, I was able to find out what programmes are working well which needs to be improved and what ones are not working well which needs to be refined or eliminated. One was with regard to parents/school relationship and how families can help to reinforce the training on

multiculturalism which is given in the school.

The second is with regard to training of teachers and helping them to translate the materials from the resources into the context of the school. The third is greater clarity with regard to responsibility for every aspect of the school inclusivity programs and harmonisation of these programmes and activities as well as the social justice outreach in such a way that all students and teachers are carried along.

With regard to parent/school relationship, one of the chaplains noted that it is hard to teach the students values in school which are not being observed at home; it is harder even to make students embrace a way of seeing diversity if parents are teaching them and enforcing a contrary value at home. The examples which the students receive at home and how parents model behaviour according to this chaplain is what needs to be strengthened hence her call for greater formation of parents on the values of equity and diversity, and their participation in some of the social justice outreach programs of the school. She argues further this way:

The parent-teacher interview needs to be improved in terms of communication. We need to find a better strategy for communicating with parents so that they can open up to us about their own issues and challenges which can help us to help their children. Sometimes parents are protective of their dignity especially if they are poor or from a minority group. Again, we need to improve on how we can determine if the home has the same safe space attitude that the school has. Teachers want to speak with me and willing to talk about what is going on with the kids or teachers calling me to give me information on things that needs to be done better. The lines of communication are better (NC2, interview 16 December 2014).

Another respondent reinforced this position and brought out not only the aspect of communication but also how students, parents and community are all participating in developing the strategies for inclusion and living it. She emphasised the school-

family-church triad of relationship as one that needs to be improved when she said:

Sometimes I feel that we have to go back to the parents and somehow educate the parents, get them to be a part of the community, and not just contact them when there are problems with the child or when the child is failing courses, or when they get into trouble. I think it's more how do we get our bigger community to understand that when you're in our school community we're made up of so many things and so many cultures and backgrounds and maybe parents need to be aware of things and discuss them at home and for them to say look people are different than you, you don't put them down for differences, you don't put them down for not having as much money as we do, you don't feel superior because you have more money, or because you have a house and they live in an apartment. I don't think that these are things that are discussed in the home either. And I know that sometimes that we have those issues, where kids may or may not be aware of how they are coming across to their friends – I know this is actually an issue that has come up a bit more recently. I would actually like to get the parents more involved, even if it's not coming to school, but at least working with the community and the church to support the school initiatives (CN14, 8 December 2014).

Another teacher (CN6) noted that he was not only satisfied with Community of the Beloved inclusive culture but that it is the best which he has seen in his many years of teaching in a Catholic school:

Community of the Beloved actually is as inclusive as probably one of the best I've taught at, especially for a catholic school because I know a lot of people probably think catholic schools aren't very inclusive, but Community of the Beloved is very inclusive in terms of... ethnic wise we do a lot of this thing which is called one community, where it brings every cultural group from the school together and involved in a dance and they bring in food and there's a lot of that they do at this school that involve that...for different, various groups like music, athletics, all that kind of stuff. They look at like athletes who have been gay, or black and there's a lot of inclusivity – the resource department also are very good for inclusivity for kids who are at different levels, not just kids who have different backgrounds. We have black history

month here – they do a lot of stuff (CN6, Interview, December 8 2014).

Another teacher pointed out the aspect of the need to diversify the faith traditions, whose moral and social ethics are employed in developing the inclusivity strategy and also the need for integration of the programmes in such a way that they improve students' engagement:

I think that the approach could be strengthened by engaging students more and I know there is more than just the Roman catholic faith in this school and engaging kids who are not of that faith and include them in conversation and maybe doing some of their... you know what they do as far as showing their faith and developing their faith so that it is truly a multicultural environment, rather than looking at the students as just going to mass and taking the religion courses and maybe make it a broader approach (CN17, interview 8 December 2014).

There was the aspect of teacher education and formation which were highlighted by seven respondents. One teacher observed that it is so helpful that there are resources which people can refer to and written documents both from Catholic social ethics, the ministry and the board, but there is the need to harmonise these documents. There is the need also for teachers to take time to study these documents and implement them. She argues further in the interview:

I think that we need to have maybe more teachers on board like just sort of working together, collaborate together and when it comes to have days where we sort of just sit down as a department and discuss things. Like right now we were talking about the outcomes and expectations – the graduate expectations when it comes to religion courses – what are our expectations? What do we want to see? So I think it's important that we do have collaboration in that respect, that we have open discussion, integration of all programs because I think that we also have a wealth of ideas, different programs and activities so if we all shared those ideas we're able to apply strategies consistently in our department and in our school community

(CN13, 8 December 2014).

What I learned from the responses is that there is no clarity about each program in the CEIE and EIE activities here at Community of the Beloved in terms of goals and objective. There is a deluge of programs which one of the respondents called 'a tiring propaganda' (CN 20, interview, 10 December 2014), while another respondent (CN 4, interview 12 December 2014) observed that there is need to "to make a more concerted effort to do this (CEIE programmes) versus paying lip service." But there is a strong awareness of this new approach to education and a deliberate attempt to adopt some paths towards this using both the resources from the board and ministry of education and the creative appropriation of the school administration, parents, teachers and educational assistants.

4.6 Are you satisfied with your school's inclusive education? Give reasons for your answer

In response to this question both to the two focus groups and twenty-one teachers who answered the question everyone except one respondent said that they were satisfied. According to one of the executive members of the school council who also participated in both of the focus group discussions, the reasons for the high rate of satisfaction is not only because of the numerous awards which Community of the Beloved have won but because of Community of the Beloved dynamic approach which she summarised as follows:

At Community of the Beloved we look at students as individual not as belonging to a particular group; if the reason is because of their color or identity that they are not achieving success we individualize each approach. The test score defines identified in the Students Learning Improvement Plan are important but at Community of the Beloved students are not simply defined by numbers in the grade; students are looked at as a whole human being not simply as a number that is written in the score chart. We are trying to progressively deal with this in class for, e.g. the Aboriginal studies program. We need to be aware of these unique identities...are we being ethnocentric...? it is a challenge: how can we cater to groups of students with

particular identity? Is there something missing as part of curriculum which we can help them with? Is there a negative hidden curriculum that we need to confront and change? We have a challenge of time....we have to create opportunities for staff to gather. We are on track. We attended the diversity and equity program and we stopped attending because Community of the Beloved was applying what we were being thought. We try to use materials from the context. We are not perfect but it can always grow (FGP, focus group discussion, 16 December 2014).

Another teacher also noted the high level of satisfaction based on the extensive programmes and activities at Community of the Beloved. While noting the need for greater harmonization of programs and activities, he expressed his satisfaction in these words:

I am satisfied that we have made an attempt that it has been formalized to a certain degree. I think there is always room for improvement and follow up; if we go back to the pastoral guidelines for same sex students there was a strong push when it came out; they sat on the shelf and it is important to be proactive when it comes to these challenges and unfortunately things are addressed only when there is a problem but that does not mean that there is no problem in this areas because nobody brings this up (CN 18, interview, 17 December 2014).

However, there are four respondents (4) who expressed some satisfaction but some reservations that there are some students at Community of the Beloved who may be falling off the cracks and that Community of the Beloved success should not becloud people's vision of seeing those few students who are suffering alienation. The opinion of these four respondents is best presented in the view of CN13 when she said:

But I do think that we have a safe, inclusive environment. I don't think that anyone feels left out and if they do then I hope that we're working on it, because I know that we have a large group of ESL students who are also

feeling, perhaps a little alienated right now – new culture, new school, new everything, new faith because a lot of them come from counties where religion is not a subject that is taught or even practiced or anything like that so I'm hoping that we are reaching out to those communities, while we do have the mentorship program, where we reach out specifically to grade nines but there are things where we sort of reach out to students in the ESL program, just to make sure that there're included as well (CN13, 8 December 2014).

The only respondent who expressed dissatisfaction with the program at Community of the Beloved was damning in his response to whether he was satisfied with the program he said:

No, not at all. I think that so much of what we do is to meet statistics and standards and measurements. So much of our energy has gone into that. We run all kinds of programming to say we've done it but we never go back and measure anything. We never have the time to sit back and reflect on 'well has this done the job'. I find that really problematic. I hate just being told that these are benchmarks or whatever. Let's talk about it. Is it working? Is it not working? (CN4, 12 December 2014).

What is evident is that the staff, students and parents of Community of the Beloved expressed a strong satisfaction in what they have been able to accomplish since 2011, when this school embraced a strong and active mission to create an inclusive school culture. There is also urgency expressed that there is more to be accomplished and I observed a strong passion and enthusiasm from the respondents and focus groups that a majority of the stakeholders in this school want to continue to be at the leading edge in both the CEIE and the EIE.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that there are important documents and resources which serve as guide for teachers and administrators at Community of the Beloved in the task of developing activities and programmes, which promote safe school and an

inclusive school culture with the aim of realising the goals of the CEIE and the EIE. Through the presentation and analysis of interviews with teachers, administrators and chaplains in individual interviews and focus group discussion, the chapter showed the three themes which are reflected in how the teachers understand diversity and multicultural education, and the two themes on how they implement the strategies. The chapter showed the different approaches at Community of the Beloved for creating an inclusive school culture and the various activities and programs which have been developed for realising this goal.

The chapter further showed that there are some teachers who neither understood the content nor the context of diversity and multicultural education and a few who are not satisfied with the programs and activities. However, a majority of the teachers understand and appreciate this new approach to education and are enthusiastically following the programmes as well as developing some specific Community of the Beloved approach to meeting the goals of the CEIE. However, harmonising the programmes was shown in our interviews and observation as still constituting a serious challenge. In addition, communicating and maintaining a consistent approach through the triad of school-family-church is also shown to be an area needing strengthening.

However, beyond the success stories which have been presented in this chapter lies a bigger question and concern which was observed and which I gained from interviews and focus group discussions. It is about the challenges which Community of the Beloved faces in implementing the CEIE and the EIE within the bigger context of the divisive polemics about the relevance of this approach to education. Community of the Beloved as we have seen is one of a few Catholic schools who are fully implementing the board-wide directive on CEIE. But there are both internal and external pressures on schools like Community of the Beloved within the wider context of maintaining a distinctive Catholic character of her educational reform in

order to be compliant with the goals of CEIE and the EIE. What are the challenges that schools like Community of the Beloved face and what are the opportunities which this new way of education offers to Catholic schools in Ontario? This is the questions which I turn to in the next chapter.

Chapter Five

Presentation, interpretation and discussion of results: challenges and opportunities of diversity and multicultural education in Catholic education in Ontario high schools

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the challenges and opportunities of diversity and multicultural education in Ontario Catholic high schools. It presents and analyses the data which were collected through interviews with teachers and administrators and two focus groups at Cardinal Community of the Beloved Catholic High School, Scarborough. These data were enriched with additional responses from administrators, consultants, chaplains and superintendents from the Catholic board office and a focus group made up of chaplains and religious education consultants and experts. The EIE and CEIE form the context for the framing of the research instrument and the backdrop for the responses from teachers and focus groups. The theoretical framework of this research, as discussed in chapter two and the literature reviewed, give a blueprint of the lens with which the research interrogated the context of the school and the text of the school culture.

Five themes were identified and coded accordingly namely: (i) the opportunities for diversity and equity education given the demographics of the Catholic schools; (ii) the challenges of implementing the CEIE and the EIE; (iii) the limitations of the program; (iv) the tension between the teachers and administrators on the meaning of equity and diversity of education; and (v) the personal bias and prejudice of teachers against some minorities like the LGBTQ community and Black students.

The chapter begins with demonstrating how stakeholders see the changing

demographics of the Catholic schools in the board as an opportunity for innovation through a faith-based socio-education. For some others, these new demographics are more a threat which requires the fortification of the institutional narratives which were developed even before the introduction of full funding of Catholic schools by the Harris government in 1984. However, the chapter shows that respondents, both in individual interviews and focus group discussions, see the development of the CEIE as a historical exigent which poses multiple challenges to the Catholic educational systems as we know it. These challenges are discussed in detail in this chapter as—inadequate formation and preparation of teachers on equity and diversity issues and the strategies for inclusion; the sometimes dialectically opposed approaches to creating an inclusive school culture among stakeholders; the limitations of the resources available to the teachers and schools, the tension between the official teaching of the Catholic Church on which the foundation of Catholic education is based and the programs and the strategies of the Ministry of Education; and the challenge of personal bias and prejudice of many teachers and administrators towards minorities.

5.2 The opportunities presented by diversity of student population and a multicultural Canada

There are two important studies on this topic which form a backdrop for the analysis and presentation on the opportunities presented to the Catholic schools, for instance, by the presence of diverse population in the development of an inclusive school culture in a multicultural Canada. The Pan-Canadian Educational Indicators Program (PCEIP) in its report for Statistics Canada, *Education Indicators in Canada: An International Perspective* (2012) notes that as at September 2009 Canada ranks seventh out of the 30 member nations of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) regarding the proportion of its population aged 25-64 that has a university degree. Canada is also among the countries that allotted the highest proportions of gross domestic product (GDP) to education. The report also indicates

that the gap between migrants and Canadians who were born in Canada is closing because of the strong drive and pressure on migrants to study and that this has the potential of helping to close a perceived achievement gap between migrants, minorities and students from predominantly White families (Statistics Canada, 2012: 15).

This PCEIP report was developed in response to a request from the provinces and territories via the Strategic Management Committee of the Canadian Education Statistics Council (CESC). The international context provided by the report supports the mission of CESC to “create and commit to comprehensive and long-term strategies, plans, and programs to collect, analyze, and disseminate nationally and internationally policy-relevant and comparable statistical information” (Statistics Canada, 2012: 5). The report also highlighted that Canada is becoming the first place of choice for international students and that over 100,000 international students are studying in Canada. So strong is the Canadian educational system, as this report indicated, that the Ontario government is planning an aggressive scheme to export education by facilitating the admission of more international students, whose high school fees will be a good boost to the economy of the province. However, the report points to an important dimension which the internationalization of education in Canadian schools brings to a multicultural Canada:

International students are generally well received because they represent an additional source of revenue for the institutions they attend. They may also contribute to the viability of programs when the domestic student base is somewhat limited. In Canada, as in other countries that belong to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), many institutions and governments are now actively marketing their educational programs to attract such students. In addition to the economic benefits they may provide, international and foreign students also add to the social and cultural dimensions of the communities in which they study. They may become future citizens, or they may become unofficial ambassadors when they return home (Statistics Canada, 2012: 65).

The 1990 Bernard Blishen Report commissioned by the Institute for Catholic Education, Toronto (ICE) states that from a sociological perspective the continued existence of Catholic schools in Ontario will depend on how all the stakeholders make a communal commitment to the goals and objectives of the school, which include creating a Catholic environment in the schools (Murphy, 2004: 3). Murphy notes that this longitudinal report was supported by the Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association (OCSTA) and was aimed at generating an evidence-based conclusion to determine how the Catholic schools were perceived in the province. This report was commissioned to develop strategies for meeting the challenges of the changing times and the resistance from within the Catholic community and outside the church to public funding of Catholic schools in Ontario.

It was a report which examined how the future of Catholic education will look like in Canada especially in the province of Ontario. It also showed that a majority of students and teachers in the Catholic school system did not share the views of mainstream traditional Catholicism on issues like sexuality, birth control and abortion. However, most stakeholders in Catholic education in Ontario, according to this report, saw diversity and multiculturalism as an opportunity rather than a threat. The same finding was also established from data from a survey (unpublished) carried out by the social justice committee and the committee on students' success of the Catholic board in 2012 (*Questions and Answers Regarding Catholic Equity and Inclusive Policy*, 2012). Mark McGowan was very categorical about the import of this report which was really the first attempt in post-Harris Bill 30 to explore the opportunities of new demographics and the theological, philosophical, contemporary, contextual and curricular settings for the development of a relevant faith-based education in the Catholic schools. He writes (McGowan, 1996: 7).about this report:

The Blishen Report, released by the Institute for Catholic Education in 1990, provides us with a starting point. We have to begin with the recognition that large numbers of Catholics have removed themselves from participation in

the institutional church. The Blishen Report indicates that 63% of parents and 50% of grade 12 students attend mass more than twice a month. The result is a significant portion of the broader Catholic educational community is unchurched. This is a problem for the entire community and not the fault of any one part of it. Yes, some parishes are moribund. Yes, some parents don't take seriously their own spiritual lives or their responsibility to raise their children within the faith. Yes, some teachers are indifferent toward the vocation aspect of teaching. But pointing fingers at one another will not solve this problem. Since it is a problem for the entire church community, its solution is beyond the mandate and competence of the school. The school is merely the location where the pre-existing divisions within the community become most evident. Nevertheless, certain school based issues can be addressed

One of the questions, according to McGowan which was posed to various groups in the preparation of the Report was to speak the first word that came to their mind in relation to Catholic schools. The word that came to the minds of Catholics as well as non-Catholics in their response was community. This is the heart of the matter from the interviews conducted, that is, that the presence of diverse student population in the Catholic schools in Ontario is an opportunity to create a new community of the beloved where everyone feels like a first-born child. This is how the foremost Catholic educationist in Ontario, Msgr Dennis Murphy(2004, 7), puts it:

Much has been written in recent years on the distinctive features of a Catholic school from building distinctive curriculum, to pastoral care services, to religious and family life education programs, and so on. The ultimate characteristic, however, that distinguishes a Catholic school is its unique learning environment of Christian community. The task of continually creating, recreating, fostering and sustaining Christian community as the learning environment of a Catholic school is the ultimate challenge facing Catholic education today.

The goal Murphy argues will be to create a community where there is a space and place for God and for each individual. One principal(Grace, 1995: 162). captures this

mission clearly when she said:

The special mission of a Catholic school is to have Christ at the centre of all we do in school and to give the pupils in our care opportunities to take part in spiritual growth...in a living worshipping community...I firmly believe it is my prime responsibility to keep God at the center of our school, permeating everything

Murphy argues strongly that the creation of a community, or what is often called an inclusive school culture, is the basic criterion in determining whether teachers and administrators are being effective in the delivery of Catholic education. Community in Catholic education is the primary *locus revelationis*—the primary place where God speaks to us and reveals his face to us. Creating a community of faith in the school is essential to integrating the curriculum. (Murphy, 2003: 18).

The fundamental goal or objective of the Catholic school should be how to tell the story of the faith in such a way that the students enter into the story and see themselves as a part of a history of faith and an environment of faith in which evangelization of culture takes place. This is what distinguishes the Catholic school from the public school in Ontario according to Mark McGowan. It is also the criterion with which the Catholic schools will be judged and the platform on which it will stand or fall:

This new creature called Catholic public education is barely 10 years old; it is still a child. What it will grow into as it matures is not yet clear. It is possible that through default or through apathy it will lose its distinctive Catholic identity and largely resemble its public system equivalent. Should that occur, the taxpayers would not likely tolerate the existence of such a redundant and expensive duplicate system, nor should they. The next several years are critical for Catholic education in this province. We live in a time of extraordinary educational turmoil, social upheaval, and ecclesiastical polarization. We need to begin with an examination of the times in which we find ourselves, in order to identify the pressure points on Catholic education and the opportunities which lie before it (McGowan, 1996: 5).

The same findings on the importance of creating a community of shared love and concern were noted in the Our Catholic Schools project re-launched in November 2006, by the Institute for Catholic Education. The *Our Catholic Schools* was first created in 1999 as part of the communication initiative of the OCSTA who wanted to involve the schools and other stakeholders in determining the future of Catholic education in a changing pluralistic context. 27 out of the 29 Catholic boards participated in this initiative and submitted proposals (ICE, 2007: 2). Participants were required to comment on any of the following: (1) The distinctiveness of Catholic schools; (2) The value of Catholic schools, (3) The community's hopes for Catholic schools; (4) the major issues facing Catholic schools today; (5) the strategies for promoting and protecting Catholic education (ICE, 2007: 1).

One of the key findings of the *Our Catholic School* dialogue is presented in this way:

Social justice activities and a call to service within the community are also regarded as a valuable characteristic of Catholic schools. The social responsibility and communal perspective to help those less fortunate is instilled in students and is based on the Catholic belief system. Schools provide a positive, all-inclusive, accepting and forgiving learning environment. The focus is on a better more caring world. (ICE, 2007, 7).

This was similar to the initiative carried out in 1998 by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales under the Catholic Education Service on the spiritual and moral development across the curriculum. One thing which stands out in these two documents is that the distinctiveness of Catholic education is intimately connected to Catholic identity. Another point which emerges is that creating a Catholic identity is shown to be synonymous with creating a community of learners and friends in the Catholic school. Catholic identity is not opposed to diversity, it actually presupposes it. Catholic identity requires that teachers and students be committed to their own religious or educational traditions as a way of preserving the community of faith, and

ensuring the integrity of the educational system. However, the question of Catholic identity in itself is open to multiple interpretations as shown in Chapter Two. The SIC framework proposes that school cultures are shaped by the daily activities of the stakeholder in their interaction in the school environment. This is why in the face of changing demographics in the GTA the perspectives of teachers and administrators are shown to be significant in understanding the complexities and tension in the system.

The demographics served by the school board which I studied offer a great opportunity to create a transformative inclusive school culture in the Catholic school system. According to one of the community relations experts (TDC8), a recent random study of one school in the board showed that the students come from 17 different countries. For the Christmas celebrations, students were asked to bring the Christmas traditions and stories from their respective countries of origin, and it was according to TDC8 an amazing event for the beauty of diversity. But what it shows, he argues is that; “the Catholic school can create a tapestry of stories which brings something new for the students and the wider society” (TDC8, 14 March, 2015). In this light, he argues that the board’s equity and inclusive education should not be seen as a threat but as an opportunity:

Very simply put, we have the opportunity to use the approach of a culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy as a framework to create a new and innovative faith-based educational system. That means that the context of the students must inform our school culture; students must see themselves reflected in the curriculum; educators need to understand the demographics of their school population and tailor their materials to address the demographics of that particular school system. Therefore, you cannot approach today’s students living in Toronto which according to the UN is the most multi-racial and multicultural city in the world from a framework of Eurocentric way of knowing; it must be a global-centric understanding of the world. Therefore, educators are given the impression that the student do not come to the class as empty vessels. They have a lot of social capital that can

be leveraged in order for them to deliver the curriculum and in order to generate the interest of the students for learning. Studies show that when the students don't see themselves reflected in the curriculum they conclude that there is no role for them in society and conclude that there is nothing for them in what you are offering, so we must seize this opportunity now and not postpone it (TDC8, 14 March, 2015).

It was because of the board's commitment to seize the opportunity offered by the new demographics and the social change in Canada which led to the creation of the social justice committee both at the board and in all the schools under the board. The mandate of the social justice committee was; "to advise the Board and schools on Policies, Programs and Services which close the learning opportunity gaps for school communities through the lens of Catholic Social Justice Teaching of the Church" (*Catholic Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy Document*, 2010). The group at the board level was seen as pivotal in seizing the new opportunities of multiculturalism and the Equity and Inclusivity Education policy of the ministry. In that regard, the committee was expected to work closely and collaboratively with the following statutory committees at the board level: Student Achievement, Religious Affairs and Human Resources Committee, Nurturing Catholic Community Committee and Staff Equity and Inclusive Education Committee, and Catholic Student Leadership Impact Team.

The committee was charged with the work of helping the realization of the CEIE by:

(a) supporting the implementation of evidence-based strategies grounded in Catholic Social Teaching that close the learning opportunity gap for school communities; (b) Creating links with external partners to support the mandate and understand the alternative means by which the learning opportunity gap may be closed; (c) listening, understanding and acting upon student voices and community concerns; (d) Developing and/or promoting learning opportunities for school communities through the lens of the social teachings of the Church; (e) Developing

and/or promoting professional development opportunities for staff through the lens of the social teachings of the Church.

According to one of the experts at the board (TDC2) the present cultural change in Canada is a huge opportunity to celebrate the inclusivity of Catholic education. This he argues can only happen when the schools and teachers have success stories to share with the Catholic community as well as the wider Canadian society which sometimes have anti-Catholic and anti-religious sentiments. He speaks about the impact of stories and the opportunities it offers for the schools:

I went to the reunion of students that I taught 20 years ago. I was the only teacher invited. I heard most of them say to me, 'you cared so much about me.' The constant for them was 'you cared about me' and 'you told me that I can succeed'. These are kids I taught from very challenging circumstances of poverty. They had a great expectation on these boys and I taught them as friends. I did not know all their stories, but some of them I know. I concentrated on doing what I thought was right. I did not make excuses for them or being merely sentimental with them but I made them feel wanted and I told them that they could succeed and that we were going to succeed with them... and they succeeded (TDC2, 16 December, 2014).

TDC2 believes that the social justice committees are so important in seizing the opportunities offered by the CEIE because they can help in creating programs and activities which can help students to succeed. But the committees must be properly aligned to findings of current research and evidence and not simply about how to meet the metrics of achievement set by the Education, Quality, Accountability Office (EQAO) of the Ministry of Education. He elaborates further in his response on the opportunities of diversity and multicultural education in the board; "The Social Justice committees should not take a narrow approach to understanding students' success. Students' success goes beyond metrics" (TDC 2, 18 December, 2014).

This question of the opportunities offered to the Catholic school was posed in the discussion with the focus group (TC) at Newman's. The following key points were

made in the discussion. Firstly, is that the CEIE is still a new initiative in the board and that the board was not proactive in facing up to this new opportunity. As a result, there are expected stresses, strains and confusion in what is going on. Secondly, creating a social justice committee is one good step, but it is not enough. All stakeholders must work hard in developing practices of inclusion and equity in the school environment beyond curricular reform or religious education; one size does not fit all. Thirdly, is to find a way of simplifying practices of inclusion beyond paper works that pivot the listening attitude and how the community experience becomes opportunity for innovation as a social surplus rather than a cultural deficit. Finally, finding out why things are not working and confronting the challenges as opportunities rather than running away from problems or postponing the issue.

Hopefully, the Catholic community, as the focus group identified at Newman's, see any challenge or crisis as opportunity for growth; hence there was emphasized the realization that the challenges of equity and inclusive education within a faith-based multicultural school community should be approached as a grace rather than from the perspective of deficit (TC, 19 December, 2014).

However, to realise this goal and seize the opportunity, a leader in the school board proposes the following:

Social justice committees will fail and is already stillborn because the following questions are not being answered: how to close the learning opportunity gap between White students and minority students. There are two main factors which bring this about: 1. Do we know about our kids' home life? 2. Do we know the conditions of the kids and how we can make them more equitable? Second question is what skills do the students have which can help them move out of poverty and how can schools help them develop them? These have to be layered over a long period through an inclusive school culture within a clearly thought out program of building a resilient community. How do we create living community schools? What are the results and achievements of our deep commitment to issues of justice and equity? What stories can we tell which can become a Gospel message about

how we as a Catholic community are helping to bring about new heaven and new earth by paying attention to the signs of the times? We address these questions by building our schools as communities of love where everyone has a sense of belonging (TDC 2, 18 December, 2014).

5.3 Inadequate formation on diversity and equity education

In engaging participants on the question of the challenges of inadequate formation on diversity and equity education, the basic understanding of Catholic education is presumed. This is because there is a general orientation on Catholic education which is given to Catholic teachers who enter into the Catholic education system in Ontario. Furthermore, most teachers who enter Catholic education system in Ontario normally are required to have obtained the religious education (RE) additional qualification (AQ) and certification through accredited schools who deliver the RE. The basic teaching on Catholic education is contained in the *Declaration on Catholic Education* of the Second Vatican Council (1965) which was reviewed in chapter two. This declaration emphasizes the importance of formation of Catholic teachers on social and cultural values in order to help them to become better educators. It states in detail as such:

Teachers must remember that it depends chiefly on them whether the Catholic school achieves its purpose. They should therefore be prepared for their work with special care, having the appropriate qualifications and adequate learning both religious and secular. ...Possessed by charity both towards each other and towards their pupils, and inspired by an apostolic spirit, they should bear testimony by their lives and their teaching to the one Teacher, who is Christ (Declaration on Catholic Education, 1965: no. 8).

Respondents (both teachers and administrators) agree in general that there is an inadequate preparation of teachers at this point in time on implementation of the CEIE. As we indicated in chapter four, an indication of the lack of skills needed is shown by the fact that many teachers could not give a clear and precise answer about

what diversity and multicultural education is all about. One of the superintendents at the board (CN2) points out that the challenge to diversity and equity education can only be identified by looking at the limitations within the school board and particular schools under the board. He feels that like most teachers in the board, he is not sufficiently prepared to become change agents in bringing about the reform of the school culture. The programs which he identified (annual professional days) do not offer enough theoretical and practical framework and formation for teachers. He argues further:

Essentially, the Catholic board frowns upon LGBT kids in general, not on the kids themselves but on the whole idea of it. We don't have an LGBT group here at the school or anything like that so there's no real help being given to them in an integrated manner because we are not formed to do that. We haven't really had much training I should say, like a PD day where they talk about it. At least I haven't had any, if you know what I'm saying. There's that with the board and again with black students... I don't know. Like with respect to black students, black students we don't talk about any specific culture in that sense. We talk about our kids in general. There's nothing that is specific about black students or where black students are coming from (i.e. this is what they have been told by school, what their parents have tried to teach them). I don't know. I think, I guess those are the limitations. Myself, I just haven't walked in their steps so I can't see through their eyes, which sometimes I feel is really important. My board, there's no PD, there's none of that, that comes down to us here at Community of the Beloved (CN 15 December, 2014).

He also pointed out that there is a fragmentation in the planning of the school program as the questions and teaching on equity and diversity are often relegated to the department of religion. Accordingly, he remarked; "with respect to our school, we don't have an LGBT group or anything like that. In our religion classes, and things like that, we will talk about it. In physical education we will talk about it but nothing big and broad that's talked about." (CN2, 15 December, 2014).

Another teacher (CN3, 15 December, 2014) agrees with this view but goes on to point out that lack of formation of the teachers is the number one reason why she thinks that the board and the school will never be able to meet its stated strategies and programs with effective activities for creating an inclusive school culture:

I said I haven't heard much from the board about black students or from the school, specifically. LGBT... we just got something from OECTA about it, I gave it to my husband so that he could look at it, about what we are supposed to deal with.. we are allowed to have these groups where these kids can meet, like LGBT club. I think the board hasn't really given us one direction for it though or any formation. I don't think they've had the wherewithal to come out and say this is what we are going to do and this is how we are going to move forward. I think with the black and LGBT, I don't have tons of direction. Limits in myself? Well, I'm constantly seeing my own limited formation... I'm one of the few teachers, I think, that really talks a lot about LGBT and so I'm very proud of how I approach it with the kids. One of my very best students, who is now a human rights lawyer and gay, in grade nine he said: "Miss, God doesn't make junk". I say that to all my grade nines whenever I hear them say: "You're gay!" If they are mature enough to talk about it, we do talk about it. There are plenty of gay students here and plenty of gay teachers here. We are one and God doesn't make junk. I am pleased with myself about how I deal with it but I'm kind of operating on my own not because of any formation I got (CN3, 15 December, 2014).

It must be understood also that inadequate formation on equity and diversity and multiculturalism in the school is not simply a challenge facing only teachers. There was a consensus among 12 respondents that in order to have an inclusive school culture that the students themselves should be formed on the values, attitudes and

practices of inclusion. If the students are not accepting of each other, it vitiates the formation being given to them by teachers. The school is a place for formation but it is also a center for re-education especially for students who have received inadequate or biased teaching about identity, White culture and privilege and the framing of minorities in mainstream culture of Canada. This perspective was represented well by one of the teachers involved especially in helping students with low emotional intelligence and social awareness. She lamented the absence of a student formation program on CEIE in these words:

The greatest challenge is that they don't have a lot of education regarding multiculturalism. A lot of kids taking courses where they aren't discussed. American History, different cultures kids would be more... it's hard to do because of the curriculum. We can't change the curriculum. In the Toronto Board there is a lot of stuff surrounding multiculturalism. Our board is restricted. We don't give the kids that option (CN 21, November 21, 2014).

This teacher further indicated that this challenge is reflected especially in the failure of the Catholic school and the ministry of Education to come to a certain agreement in terms of programs and practices of inclusion. Whereas the CEIE has been formulated following the equity and inclusivity documents and protocol from the Ministry of Education, there is no consensus between the two on practices. This, CN21 added creates a disconnect among the teachers on the front line because of many reasons: Firstly, the Catholic schools are not isolated from the rest of society so what goes on in society and especially the divisive politics about inclusive education in Ontario affects the thinking and social ethics of teachers. Secondly, the same applies to students whose friends might be going to non-faith public schools who may also be asking why certain practices adopted in the public schools do not apply in their own particular school (Community of the Beloved). Thirdly, is the challenge posed by the fact that even within the Catholic educational system and the Catholic Church, there is a lack of consensus about the value and goal of the CEIE. CN21 argues that the Catholic Church should heal the rift between the progressive and the

conservatives within its ranks as this also plays out in Catholic schools like Community of the Beloved where teachers take different stand on this issue based on the progressive-conservative polarity regnant in mainstream Catholicism:

I think with the Roman Catholic Church we need to go to the top – Pope to the priests and different churches. Get to the priests so they can educate their congregation on multiculturalism, diversity, racism and prejudice. If the priest does it personally, group, congregation... it might get to the catholic school system. Formation is not only about teacher professional development; it involves everyone—teachers, students, parents, the church community etc (CN 21, November 26, 2014).

However, four respondents think that the students are more accepting of each other and have less prejudice than the teachers because they are living in a different time. They argue that in addition the work of the department of social work at Community of the Beloved has borne so much fruit in terms of integration of the students. This view is well presented in this response:

I think the demographic is changing at this school and I think as it's changing, I think there is more acceptance 'cause I noticed that the kids 12 years ago, the few black kids stuck together like crazy. Now I see that there is more of a mix although I do see the black kids make friends with the black kids, which is normal. I think a lot of it is due to our child and youth worker, SJ, too. She is great about trying to ensure that these kids feel like they are part of the school. I don't know how they would feel but I think it's coming. I don't think it's totally there yet, but I think it's coming and you know these kids get it with regard to equity and inclusion because they were born into it...the world is changing and they are changing with it unlike some of us teachers who are old school. (CN 22, November 28, 2014).

At the focus group discussion (TB) at Community of the Beloved there was unanimity that students are more accepting of each other even though there are still incidents of bullying and intolerance. Those who think that the students are more inclusive

than their teachers point to the fact that some of the teachers were trained in the era when mono-cultural White privilege predominated the social context of Canada. This approach had no place for any critical approach to culture. Again they point to the kind of education and teaching formation which the teachers received some of which did not include equity and diversity education. Furthermore, they also point to the kind of formation they received in the Catholic Church especially those who were raised in the pre-Vatican II mind set of Catholicism as a single and undifferentiated institution (TB 18 December, 2014). The students, on the other hand, are being formed in a different kind of setting with a rich and sometimes complex cultural pluralism which demands a specific approach to equity education. CN 6 throws more light on this:

I think that they should definitely introduce more formation across the board... I know there're just in the preliminary stages of introducing that equity group for the students so that they feel comfortable and whatever background or whatever issue they have going on in their life that they feel comfortable in going to that group and doing stuff with the school and school population so that they feel comfortable (CN 6, December 8, 2014).

There is also a strong view that whereas the students show a strong commitment to inclusion, there is need for formation of students on how to deal with cases of bullying and how to identify those students who are suffering. This was especially emphasized in the two focus groups at Community of the Beloved since LGBT students and students of color are often the ones who are on the receiving end of these negative attitudes. One teacher noted that one of the limitations in the formation of students is that those students who are going through difficulty do not get the kind of formation and intervention which they need. There is the need to develop a system of identifying students who are suffering from bullying or any other negative response to anti-social behavior like discrimination directed at them by fellow students. CN 17 says in this regard:

I think we don't always have services available for students who are experiencing

difficulties. So I would think that's where the limitations are, if there is a student who isn't engaged or a student who's having difficulty whether it's at home or within their own identity and understanding themselves and people around them... I just don't think there's enough time and there's not enough outside help for these kids to receive the help they need. (CN 17, 8 December, 2014).

Another obstacles to formation for an inclusive school culture identified at Community of the Beloved is that some of the students do not wish to participate in religious ceremonies especially Mass where the school comes together once a month. The school principal identified this as the number one challenge she faces in the school with regard to shaping the minds of the students through a religious imagination on the need for inclusion:

The challenges we face is trying to get the students to go to Mass. Going to the Catholic school that students will have the same outlook, live the same values and have the same ideas. When you are all like minded it is easier for everyone to get along. Everybody is in the same group. When you take down those walls and the divisions and it makes it more inclusive. There is something for everybody to do. Everybody should feel safe to do whatever and without being put under pressure (PJT, 18 December, 2014).

This challenge was also highlighted by one of the consultants at the board when he pointed out that the religious formation and commitment of the young people and even some of the teachers is not commendable. It is, therefore, hard to speak to them from the perspective of faith about inclusion where they see religious narratives as oppressive and less inclusive. He paints a very interesting portrait which summarizes the root of the challenge:

The greatest challenge to formation and integration of the school culture and the lives of teachers and students is in the spiritual arena; the school is the closest they get to church. I think 20% of the students and teachers go to church on Sunday; this is the trend. If that is the reality this is where we get into the Catholic graduate expectations and if that is the reality of the world

with regard to students, trustees etc we cannot win with faith-based argument with regard to creating an inclusive culture; it is a battle of the mind. We did two years of research around this in order to come up with the Catholic graduate expectations. If these are the trends how do we prepare our Catholic students for future? The different skills, values, attitudes yes we have to prepare them to go to church; we have to prepare them to embrace change. We did tons and tons of research on this but it has not helped us to translate data into life-changing CEIE programs and outreach in schools (TDC5, 15 March, 2015).

5.4 The challenges of creating an inclusive school culture for minorities

The Institute of Catholic Education makes this proposition on the way forward for inclusive education:

The work of Catholic education is always linked to inclusivity. Our Catholic schools have practiced inclusivity throughout their history. We have worked diligently to include laity in the family of the Church. We include the destitute in the family of caring, the ignorant in the family of learning, the sick in the family of healing. We desire to teach all children that pass through our doors that they are not forgotten, that they are not expunged from the communal memory of our people or purged from the communal register of our hearts (*Institute of Catholic Education*, 2003:41).

However, there is a long way to go between statement of purpose and implementing the strategy for inclusive school culture. Two of the leaders at the board who both helped in drafting the CEIE strategy and now work on its implementation with the social justice groups in the schools were very blunt in the assessment of their satisfaction rate. There is a consensus that among both the social justice committees of the board and Community of the Beloved that creating an inclusive school culture in the Catholic board is still far from being realised. One consultant lamented the low success rate and retention of students of color when he said:

I am not satisfied with the equity and diversity in the board until all students

achieve success. Somewhere along the line we have not served them properly, especially in a Catholic school everybody should be succeeding somehow whatever the definition of success is in Ontario equity and diversity strategy and the EQAO. We have embraced the four benchmarks for realizing the inclusive school culture from the Ministry of Education—shared and committed leadership; inclusive curriculum and assessment practices; school community relationship; and professional learning. But we are far from realizing the goal of these, so we have a very long way to go and this is the reason why I am not satisfied at all. The CEIE might be happening in one or two schools but I do not see a high board-wide success rate (TDC8, 12 March, 2015).

The other leader was much more detailed in why he thinks the CEIE programmes and goals are not being achieved:

No I am not satisfied with the board's inclusive education. I see that kids from racial groups are not successful; when I hear that two kids from our school were murdered opposite the school I am not satisfied. These all have something to do with overcoming the bias and prejudice in our culture. When I look at the condition and pain of our LGBT students, I am not satisfied. We have admitted that some of our kids are gay and that we can affirm the kids for who they are and that we cannot restrict them to being gay. But what of our staff who are gay we have not addressed that. I am talking also of poverty, social poverty and how it affects students' success. I see a lot of poor kids falling through the cracks, so I am not satisfied at all.... We must address the issue of poverty in our board and we are so well equipped to do this following the commandments of Christ: love of neighbour. If that is our mission we must get at it as Catholics because this is a huge challenge to our claim that we are inclusive (TDC2, 16 December, 2014).

The question of creating an inclusive culture for minorities within the Catholic Schooling like Community of the Beloved was answered by 35 teachers. Thirty

argued that Community of the Beloved is already very inclusive as pointed out in the previous chapter, they show why they think that the school is inclusive—the programs adopted by the school, the symbols of inclusion which one finds on prominent walls and hallways in the school, the outreach programs within the community especially to socio-economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, the celebration of special day for minorities, and the cultural immersion programs for new students and the school leadership programs among many. However, all the respondents agreed that there is room for improvement in the following areas—creating a safe space for LGBT students, a more subject-based interaction between teachers and students from minority groups where they can feel safe to share their inner thoughts and fears; and strengthening of anti-bullying and prejudice reduction programs for teachers as well as students. There is also the challenge of developing an effective structure for monitoring and evaluating the programs within each school and some form of external monitoring and supervision which can help hold each school accountable. As one chaplain pointed out it is hard to monitor the success of equity program because:

We are dealing with human behavior and cultural issues which are not measurable in a quantitative manner. But our evaluation and monitoring is a paper-based report, where you have to tick off what you have done and weight it on a Richter scale etc. But this is not effective. We are dealing with human beings; we are dealing with their faith, worldview and their happiness; we are dealing with student success and student achievement which should not be judged simply in terms of test scores. I think many of our students from minority groups are suffering. We might not have the high suicide rate among the LGBT students as we have in the public school but it is occurring here for sure, so this is a challenge (PC1, 19 December, 2014).

Another teacher in response to this question on the challenges one identifies at Community of the Beloved and the Catholic board on creating an inclusive school culture for minorities noted that whereas she thinks that Community of the Beloved

has done a great job in creating strong structures of inclusion in the school through social justice committee, there is need to create a support group for minorities:

There's a sense of social justice in the school and this is my third school while teaching and its pretty strong here so ...maybe that these students have opportunities to form groups within themselves as support groups, with the support of a teacher, that they feel that they could do this, rather than just struggle along – especially the LGBT type of group (CN 17, December 2014).

The absence of such support groups in the school makes it difficult sometimes for students to come out of their shells, but through such groups a greater sense of community and inclusion could be established. Another teacher who has been working on establishing such support groups gives reason to justify her answer:

Well, let's deal with black students first. I think again regardless of ethnic background or cultural background, in your delivery of curriculum and dealing with the students you need to be equitable but I think that that is inherent in all kinds of teaching according to the directives from the Ministry of Education. But you are talking about an inclusive school culture and not about teaching as such in the classroom which is a totally different thing. I think that sometimes when we are in a large group it is hard for me as a teacher to know the needs of each student. But small groups in the school could help teachers to work directly with particular groups based on the needs which they identify. LGBT? Well, I think the board has a long way to go there. But the challenge is the same, we need to be inclusive, but the elephant in the room is always 'how do you do it?' But having safe space for LGBT and special programs and groups or clubs whatever you call them from different students is a good idea, but we have to be careful not to ghettoize our schools as our GTA (Greater Toronto Area) is these days where people live in neighborhoods based on their color and sexuality (CN1, Interview Jan 6, 2015).

Another aspect of this challenge is the inadequate representation of the minorities in the teaching and administrative staff. CN 30 identifies this as a missing link in

creating an inclusive school culture. This is because when students do not see role models from their own race and socio-cultural groups it heightens their sense of alienation. This is also challenging because people naturally bond easily with teachers from their own racial group because the students intuitively feel that such teachers and role models can understand their situation and where they are coming from. However, CN 30 thinks that there is so much effort dedicated to public relation in the board to present a picture of an ideal situation, while minimising this challenge. The Catholic board thus continues to present the equity and inclusivity programs in the school in very positive light as if there were no challenges. CN 30 continues:

Sometimes we focus on how everything is positive and everything is wonderful and how we all get along in this multicultural community and I think that we never really address the difficulties or challenges. I think that the board presents this view that everything is hunky dory and it's not and sometimes you have to put that aside – the public relations part of it and deal with the reality, even if it's just within our own community, for the board to have some initiatives to make teachers more aware of things, to allow us to have more activities, or to give us ideas and one of the things I find with the Catholic school is, I'll be honest is, we have all these different cultures – we don't have teacher representation. We have two, maybe sometimes three black teachers in the community and we have a larger black community. Pilipino – I don't know if we have any Pilipino teachers, Indian teachers or polish or any of the backgrounds that are growing in our community. I think that kids need role models and they need to identify with a person in a position of authority, to say oh ok – just because I'm a black student doesn't mean I'm never going to have the opportunity that is there for me to move ahead or get those positions, or just go to somebody who can identify with the culture (CN 30, 8 December, 2014).

Another teacher who teaches one of the science subjects points out that the challenge is that there is not enough representation of diversity in the teaching staff in the

school:

We don't have one single kid... and I think that they need role models like everybody for sure. Like everybody else, you need role models to look up to. You know, somebody that can impart some knowledge. We had a black female teacher but she just left for the States so she's gone. I'm just trying to think if there's anybody else. Right now? No. There is another teacher of a mixed background but the students will even look at her and be like: "Miss your mixed. What do you know?" Right? So, with respect to just the kids again and bringing the kids in together, yes. Again, we've tried to have Black History Month but to be honest the kids don't care. It doesn't matter who it is, none of the kids care. I mean as far as I know, with respect to literature - I'm not an English teacher so I can't speak too much towards it - but I haven't heard about too much black literature that has been put out there. So yea, I guess, yea, so I guess that would be my answer. I hope that's alright? That's an ok answer? (CN 2, 15 December, 2014).

Another teacher, CN 28 who specializes in religious education sees the inclusion of more black teachers in the schools as necessary because it is one of the best ways of addressing what many black students feel is a sense of powerlessness and alienation in their communities especially in the face of police violence and brutality in the shooting of many black males in recent news. CN 28's reasoning on this is quite illuminating:

I was just having a conversation with my students recently on how we were talking about just the protests that are happening in the States with the police forces. We spoke of how certain police forces are not representing their community in terms of race. And I say this is almost the same thing with our schools because we don't have very many black teachers on staff and so you do sort of think that those students may not feel as comfortable with coming to a non-black teacher and perhaps because do I have the understanding and the background to sort of help them with things and I can't say that I do 100% because being a person who's not in the minority group I've never had to experience racist comments or anything like that or sort of be in the

minority and sort of feeling alienated or things like that (CN 28, 16 December, 2014).

CN28 further indicated that this challenge also applies to the staff and students who self-identify as LGBT, she argues that that they also feel a sense of alienation sometimes and feel that they are under-represented. She explains further:

I think the curriculum does need to change I do think that it should be, again especially with LGBT, just more open and sort of saying like statistically 10% of our staff and students are going to be identified as an LGBT and I don't think anyone is willing to stand up and say it because its fear of being ostracized, of being bullied on kids parts, bullied on staff member's parts... you know like what are you hearing in some of the Catholic school community? So ideally I would really like for something... for the boards to maybe come up with something that would allows us to do something to be inclusive... maybe a guidebook on how to setup a GSA in your school. So I think that ideally that would be the best thing because right now we just have something that talks about inclusive and diverse strategy and policy (CN 28, 16 December, 2014).

However, one of the superintendents at the board argues that the lack of representation of minorities in the teaching and administrative staff is not a deliberate policy by the board to exclude minorities. He pointed out that the board follows the Human Resources (HR) policy set by the Ministry of Education. He gives further insight into factors affecting the hiring process and protocol in the Catholic board:

We have problem in HR because the ministry of education has passed a hiring regulation and it is very seniority based and qualification based. Whereas boards had a lot more flexibility which could be a very good thing or a very bad thing if you are abusing your responsibility under that law ...It will allow board to say we are hiring for this school that is predominantly this or that ethnicity we need someone to create greater diversity in our staff...we will like to interview candidate a..or...b...However, we don't look at the race we

look at seniority or qualification...interview and hire. That approach is very problematic about this particular regulation and a lot of board personnel shared similar view as me and it was not acted on. We need to become a diverse workforce with respect to teachers but this desire to be more inclusive in the teaching staff has slowed us down. It has taken away the board's authority to meet its needs as it sees fit as opposed to having to work with very restrictive rules from the Ministry of Education, so don't blame the board blame the Ministry of Education (TDC6, 18 December, 2014).

5.5 The limitations of programs and activities for creating an inclusive culture for minorities

There were thirty five teachers who answered the question on the limitations of the programs and activities in the school for creating an inclusive culture for minorities at Community of the Beloved within the Catholic school. Twenty two of the teachers share a similar view that the programs and activities are very generic in nature and do not sufficiently address the particular needs of students from minority population. The contention is that even though particular demographics have specific problems and challenges when it comes to students' success, each student has his or her own specific context which defines how they are affected by the problems identified. This is the crux of the matter in terms of an equity approach to diversity and multicultural education where some students have to be treated differently in an effective strategy for inclusion. This view is represented by CN 17 when this teacher identified the limitations in these words:

I think we don't always have services available for students who are experiencing difficulties. So I would think that's where the limitations are, if there is a student who isn't engaged or a student who's having difficulty whether it's at home or within their own sexual identity and understanding themselves and people around them... I just don't think there's enough time and there's not enough outside help for these kids to receive the help they need (CN 17, December 8, 2014).

He argues in terms of the Africentric and LGBT-centric schools that there may be the need because of the limitations in the separate board's programme:

...separate, supported schools, I think they both fit. In a perfect world would we need those schools or those clubs? No, we wouldn't. But, it's not a perfect world so we need to sort of look at all different kinds of ideas, options and strategies to help a lot of our students who are not succeeding in our schools. How to support those groups and validate them and make them feel as good as any other person is what is primary. Any idea of separate schooling is okay because Catholic faith-school in Ontario is also separate already (CN1, Jan, 6, 2015).

The conversation with the two focus groups—the school council at Community of the Beloved (TB) and the chaplains at the Catholic board (TA) also focused on whether the lack of representation of minorities in the teaching and administrative staff of the board and schools was a challenge to implementing the CEIE and the EIE. In TA, all the participants agreed that this is a major challenge to the board. Only one respondent (FGTA3) disagreed. According to this respondent:

I have issues with people claiming you can relate to only your own in the class. I am White but I cannot claim that I have been successful in relating better with White students more than with people of color. This kind of thinking is very exclusive and discriminatory and lowers the standard if we start giving positions based on representation rather than on merit. It is very exclusive if you hire people of particular culture to be more representative. I found it discriminatory. I feel that people should be hired on quality not on color (FGTA2, 18 December, 2014).

But the reasons given by respondents from the focus group of chaplains TA on this are quite illuminating in showing why this is a challenge to the successful implementation of the CEIE: (i) it seems that the board is not only populated by the Whites but by Italians and this shapes the policies, programs and strategies adopted by the board. The focus group noted that people are tone-deaf to minority issues because they come from a different world; (ii) the lack of representation which does

not reflect the changing demographics in society is leaving many students behind and with a feeling of hopelessness; (iii) racism and bias are elephants in the room; they are a big problem in the board because the administrators and teachers come from a different background and all bring with them their biases. This is why the focus group emphasised the need to have teachers of color and minority to help administrators develop the cultural proficiency needed to cater to the needs of minorities; (iv) the focus group also brought the idea of how 'a hidden curriculum' and Western mindset predominate all the things which happen in the school because of under-representation of minorities in the teaching and administrative staff; (v) but more significantly even the simple things as the kind of questions you ask students; and the more important things about designing the curriculum, creating social and cultural activities for the students could be better done to demonstrate the diverse experiences of the students if the board had a more equitable distribution of teaching and administrative staff in the board (TA, 18 December, 2014).

Another dimension to this challenge is that a lot of the programs being proposed are not based on evidence-based practice and are often not properly aligned to each other and coordinated in the schools. Thus the group propose that the School Learning Improvement Plan (SLIP), English as a Second Language (ESL) can be improved with evidence-based research. This will drill down the strategies required so that each student can succeed. The SLIP and ESL are all well designed and researched, but the equity and diversity component cannot stand alone without an evidence-based educational framework. This means that the practice and theory must draw from data about the context of the students which should form an essential plank of the learning plan. This evidence-base should not be construed as is the case now in terms of retention rate, report card, school assessment reports, and the impact of social justice outreach or anti-bullying programs. TDC6 from the Catholic school board office highlighted this challenge to creating an inclusive culture in his response this way:

Without evidence-based practice, the interview panelists understand that our

goal is to understand the diversity in the school in terms of hire; it is a critical goal of the department. But finding out how inclusive a teacher or an administrator is does not answer the question as to evidence in terms of what the students actually need in a particular school with regard to the inclusivity of that teacher. If we kept informal data we will be able to internally understand where we are but we do not have the mandate to do so without the trustees' permission and we do not have evidence on our students beyond the one that is in the public domain or occasional activities and data collection of the Student Leadership Impact team. We are not there yet. (TDC6, 18 December, 2014).

The same point was reiterated by one of the experts on community relations on the board who highlighted the deficiencies of the lack of evidence and data in the equity and inclusivity education of the board:

Anything that cannot be measured cannot be improved upon. One of the things we do not do at the board is that we do not take statistics for example race-based statistics; we do not have an empirical evidence of how particular students from particular demographics are doing. We need to look at the option of evidence based formulation of strategy and programs so that we can be a little bit more explicit in students' achievement and wellbeing. We gather data through students but it is not specific with regard to their background and the articulation of their perspective and what have you (TDC8, 12 March, 2015).

5.6 The tension between Church teaching and board and ministry strategies

The Catholic Church's position on the relation between secular authorities and church schools is very clear about the need for Catholic schools to follow those state laws which help in the creation of an integral education for students. This is clearly stated in its important document, *The Religious Dimension* in clear terms;

The responsibility of the Catholic school is enormous and complex. It must respect and obey the laws that define methods, programs, structure, etc, and at the same time it

must fulfill its own educational goals by blending human culture with the message of salvation into a coordinated program; it must help each of the students to actually become the 'new creature' that each one is potentially and at the same time prepare them for responsibilities of an adult member of society (*The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 1980: n. 100).

The main problem identified here in terms of creating an inclusive school culture by all respondents is the tension between the teaching of the church, and the strategy of the board in meeting the requirements of the Ministry of Education on equity and inclusive education with regard to the LGBT students. TDC7 who helped to write the CEIE and to convince the Board of Trustees to accept the document shared his frustration with me in these words:

There is a tension within our board; we have a right wing people including some of our trustees; trying to balance that tension within the board. I was part of this process from the beginning. It is very frustrating as you probably know. There are many same sex students; we call them GSA or we call them something else. But I am not sure they feel a sense of belonging. One of the interesting things about our equity strategy is that we had a heck of time having to pass it through board. Everyone is fixated on that component and we did not have time to concentrate on anything else including addressing the challenges facing our Black students (TDC7, 12 December, 2014).

CN 28 captures this problem succinctly in her response to the question on how the tension between church teaching and board implementation of Ministry of Education guidelines plays out:

I think again, I think especially when it comes to LGBT it's just a taboo subject it's just again, like a elephant in the room. We all say we're all for inclusive environments, school communities, of course they are welcomed, and yet whenever the idea of setting up a GSA comes up all of a sudden doors start slamming or lips start buttoning up and I think that's a big problem... it's what I have a tough time dealing with in the board. There are kids who

would love to be able to sit down and openly talk with other students, with other staff members freely and openly and yet I think that we just don't provide that atmosphere, we don't provide that environment here (CN 28 16 December, 2014).

Some other teacher has problem with the fact that the provincial requirements that a safe space should be provided for LGBT students and that they have a right to choose the name to call the space is not being implemented in most schools under the Catholic school:

I'd like to see the board take a different position on the LGBT. The fact that we can't call it an 'LGBT support group' is a problem. That is a unique population with all the rights of any other population and for us not to be able to identify that, I think that's a big challenge... I understand what sort of the issue is around our Catholic faith but I think it's time we look a little harder at that. Again, I'm waffling a little bit in terms of my position, but I think that we need to really, really be a little bit more, in policy, more sensitive to that population (CN1, Jan 6, 2016).

Another teacher points at the unease in the schools with the tension between the Catholic social teaching on inclusive education and the Catholic doctrine on homosexuality:

Well I think that there's a challenge... I'd like to talk about LGBT... I think being in the Catholic school system, we have not done a good enough job really addressing the Church's stand on it. I don't even think the staff understand where we are at. That's problematic. I find it problematic, also, often times when students address anything, any concerns about LGBT issues, their understanding and limitation on how to read the Bible is very different. Often times when it is addressed it is in the younger grades, and often times, what they have been taught in the parishes in the grade eight programmes is very different than what should be taught – the emphasis of language of love and tolerance. (CN4, 18 December, 2014).

This is a constant position taken by 21 of the respondents. They all agree that the Catholic social teaching as proposed by the Catholic bishops has created an impossible situation for teachers on the frontline in creating an inclusive culture.

CN1 was quite unequivocal on this; “I would say that the greatest limitation is the board, which tries to follow the Church’s dictates” (CN1, Jan 6, 2016). Another teacher, CN22 argues that the rejection by the board for the creation of a safe room for the LGBT students is opposed to the EIE policy of the Ministry of Education and the constitution of Canada and the provincial laws especially Bill 33. CN22 elaborates on this position further:

That is a big question. Obviously our board, not as much our school, our board is being challenged because of the Catholic philosophies put in practice – as distorted as they may be – that there is something wrong with people who are LGBT and that they are not supposed to be involved in sexual activity. They can exist but we don’t want to know. Our board runs into all kinds of conflict because of all kinds of initiatives in society and also a pope who isn’t as hung up as previous popes were – thank goodness. (CN 22, November 28, 2016).

Broadly speaking, the crux of the challenge was clearly identified by another teacher who is an expert in religious education (RCN 2, December 10, 2014). According to this expert, it has been over 20 years since conversations began at Community of the Beloved within the wider context of board conversation and consultation on the CEIE. There have been research and studies of the Catholic social and educational documents to find out what resources they offer for building an inclusive school culture. However, RCN 2 points out that there was too much caution because; “the problem was that there was always this idea that to move forward you had to tread lightly. And, there’s no doubt, that there is not so much going on to help students from the black community” (RCN 2, 10 December, 2014).

RCN2 also said further that diversity and equity issues are not being taken too seriously in the Catholic school because people think that these are challenges which will disappear. In this regard she identifies the challenge squarely with the Catholic school:

And, there are a lot of high ranking board officials and trustees who have a definite discomfort with the notion that they believe there are certain issues at odds and they are very reticent to all things to be celebrated in a way... they may have great words around it but I certainly don't think the product... I don't think that we've seen the reality of it and now that that's being pushed to the forefront we are, currently right now in our school, moving forward despite any... we've stopped listening to the need to dance around this issue and bring it forward and let the chips fall where they may. I've always felt a bit of reluctance. It comes off as a patronizing support, but it is, I think, when you see through it you understand that hedging things and trying to say that language isn't important, I think, is a weak way of saying that you are basically concerned about it and you want to hedge things and make it comfortable for some while making it uncomfortable for others (RCN 2, 10 December, 2014).

She argues further that; "the comfort zone should be on the people you are serving and not the people who don't really live with the problem on a day-to-day basis." (RCN 2 10 December, 2014). She explains further that this may perhaps explain the reason why adequate resources have not been provided for the teachers by the board. In addition, there is no ongoing dialogue on approaches to inclusion and what can be done about improving practices and addressing new and pressing challenges which come every day in a vastly changing and complex world.

What emerges in this situation is that the teachers in the Catholic schools are rejecting the teaching of the church on students with homosexual orientation and adopting their own specific approach to creating an inclusive school. One teacher (CN

6) whose perspective is representative of the views of most teachers argues that “there is no need to follow the church’s teaching on this matter because it is out of touch with the reality of the students” (CN 6, December 8, 2014).

It is interesting to note from my interviews, observation and private conversations with teachers and administrators that there was no single teacher respondent who made reference to any particular teaching or document of the church on creating an inclusive culture or on the pastoral care of students with homosexual orientation. Two teachers referred to the new attitude of openness of Pope Francis as an example of how to build a new tolerant and inclusive school culture for those on the margins. What this means is that the teaching of the church which is being defended at the Board level is not what is influencing the daily practices of teachers and administrators at the school level. This agrees with the dominant and demotic discourses identified in the analysis of the theoretical framework, that is, that in many faith-based educational setting in the West, the identity of the school is shaped more by the everyday practices and ‘real encounter’ between teachers, administrators and students rather than by church teaching and doctrines.

Only two administrators from among the respondents spoke of the need for the school to pay attention to the teaching of the church. What I came out with from the respondents is what could be summarized in the response of CN 6:

Well I mean as you know it's a catholic board and they have a little bit of an issue with the catholic church's position on these things, personally my school doesn't follow the church's teaching at all on this matter because it is out of touch with reality.... From my personal experience we don't follow necessarily what the church points out all the time... because lets be real its kind of backwards sometimes in its philosophies. Our school doesn't really like the church's teaching on multiculturalism, equity and inclusion...we follow what the kids need not what the church wants... we follow what the kids need more than anything (CN 6, December 8, 2014).

CN 30's response summarises this challenge with regard to the tension between the Catholic teaching and that of the Ministry of Education on equity and diversity education in a Catholic faith-based school:

With the LGBT it is difficult because I guess the party line is that the Catholic religion is anti-gay right – in certain respects. So it's difficult if a student acknowledges that or comes forward with you and tells you that he or she is gay, you have to be careful not to alienate them or be judgemental if that's your belief. I think sometimes we in our board, I think we still believe that the family is mom, dad, boy, girl, with the dog and the house, two cars, and that in many, many cases is not what the students we have are. And so we're not really sometimes informed enough or made aware enough of the different types of situations and how to help in those situations, especially from a guidance point of view. I mean we do, we learn as we go, but I don't think it's a big enough issue for the board and I think that they should make more effort with that (CN 30, 8 December, 2014).

TA focus group drew attention to another aspect of this problem, that is, the division within the board management about the challenges facing the Catholic board in holding in balance the teaching of the Catholic Church and the directives from the Ministry of Education. The focus group identified three kinds of ideological differences in the board. One is within the board of trustees and the executive committee of the board headed by the Director of Education on how to be faithful to the Catholic Church's position on one hand without running afoul of the Ministry's direction. Second, is the political ideology between the two main political parties in the Province, Liberal and Conservatives who have diametrically opposed positions on social issues. Both parties are represented in the membership of the board of trustees. These trustees are politicians who belong to opposing parties and the focus group noted that it might be that some of them are using the service in the school board as a stepping stone to pursue bigger political positions later. The third

ideological difference identified is that of gay right movement who wish to topple every religiously informed social program because of their anti-Catholic agenda; and those gay rights movement who want a more gradual approach informed by dialogue and consideration of contrary perspectives. So these three tendencies are a perfect storm for the kind of political, dogmatic and moral battles which continue to hamper the ability of the board to speak with one voice and act with one strategy when it comes to the equity and inclusivity strategy.

One of the participants in the focus group captured this challenge this way:

Some of the trustees are one sided; there are Liberals and Conservatives on the board. I have been at functions where I heard people saying 'pray that the GSA (that is Gay Straight Alliance clubs which is accepted by the Ministry of Education) do not get into our board', but they are seeing it from one end. Within the classroom the needs are different; they do not understand the bullying, the stereotyping; there are people who are opposed to our education. We are a publicly funded system and we must take the Ministry of Education policy and strategy and deliver it through a catholic lens. There is a fear that this is what our GSA clubs will undermine in the Catholic schools. GSA has its own political angle just like; EGALE (Canadian Human Rights Trust). We need to separate equity and inclusive culture in our schools from politics both in the church and in the wider society....I think this GSA was brought about by politics. There is a document which OECTA had produced on how to act as a teacher when there is a conflict between ministry and school but it does not tell us really what to do? (FGTA3, 18 December, 2014).

But the problem presented by this tension is what TDC6 noted in his response that this is defeating the goal of Catholic education. Diversity and multicultural education, he argues should be uppermost in the mind of the administrators as people think together on how to address this challenge. TDC6 explains further the rationale for his position:

One of the main challenges that I have encountered is that there are extreme

camps: the ultra-orthodox and the extremely liberal. When it comes to students with same sex orientation depending on where you are, you are more inclined to be inclusive or exclusive. This is not new to you I am sure but if you are on the orthodox extreme you tend to be more critical of them; if you are on the liberal end you are very accepting, very tolerant and you look to them through a different filter, the filter of exclusivity and acceptance. For example, the pastoral guidance from the bishops in caring for students with same-sex orientation, I will think that if you are on the liberal end of the spectrum, you will say they focus on caring but not really concrete in dealing with students with same-sex orientation. The other challenge it poses to Catholic education is that students themselves struggle and they suffer ‘untold terrors in the dark’ because they are alone, they don’t understand what is happening; they are afraid to come forward and they feel that they would not be accepted. I do believe that we have made some strides in encouraging them to be themselves but I don’t think that the minority students feel a sense of belonging in our schools and it is sad (TDC 6, 11 December, 2014).

5.7 Personal bias and prejudice against minorities

One of the greatest challenges in realising the goals of inclusion in the Catholic school are the personal bias and prejudice against minorities by fellow teachers and students. In the course of doing this research, I gave a seminar to leadership heads on ‘Gospel Foundation for Anti-Bias Education.’ In the course of the seminar, I realized that the bias and prejudice are not tendencies which you can change through policy or programs because it is also personal, cultural, institutional, legal, religious and economic. It is ingrained in the fabric of society; it is a worldview. Even though respondents were not required to take the implicit association test (IAT) which is normally recommended for teaching equity and inclusive practices to teachers, those who did and voluntarily reported to me noted that they had a high dosage of bias in the way they look at people of color and LGBT and Muslim students. One of the consultants for the board (TDC5) who has been quite active in research and advocacy

for inclusion was very definitive in his conclusion with regard to what he has found among members of the Board of Trustees, board executives, administrators and teachers when he said:

The board members may not support having a space of GSA. In a perfect world, the Catholic school culture could provide a space for same sex students, but some teachers have bias; it is so systematic so programmed into them that they are not even aware of some of these biases. Five or six years ago, I would not think we need this space. But as I go out and hear the stories of the gay students I realize they need the safe space. Cardinals and bishops need to get out and meet the same sex students and their views will change. I know the story and the questions students ask me....“Do you think I will intentionally choose this life style...?” (TDC5, 15 March, 2015).

The focus group of chaplains (TA) identified in our discussion some of the effects of having a bias as teachers and administrators. They noted a threefold challenge for inclusion, namely; (i) students are not given a voice, but the best agents for creating an inclusive school culture should be the student because; “they are on the frontline; they are more comfortable with a culture of Catholic leadership; they are able to identify injustice, they want to be given the tools to change the world but when teachers are biased against certain students because of their background they will not be given a voice”(FGTA1, 18 December, 2014); (ii) equity and diversity in the school is more about experiential teaching and learning for both teachers and students and those who are biased cannot enter into the experience of others or learn in the presence of another; (iii) biased teachers find it hard to relate the curriculum to real world to make it real by bringing skills, knowledge, value to life context. “We are not educating the students to be loners, or simply scientists but we are educating them for life and not simply for physics; it is the holistic view that really makes Catholic education different from public education (TDC5, 15, March, 2015).

Another aspect pointed out in TA is the hidden nature of bias. No one goes around with 'bias' written on his or her face. However, when a biased teacher is operating with the limitations of the regnant hidden curriculum that is loaded with bias, it destroys all the goals of the Catholic Graduate Expectation. According to an expert with the board of education, bias is a problem in the Catholic school and it is hard to detect. He elaborates on this in his response to the interview:

The journey begins inward you first really examine yourself as an educator and a leader and move outward how you will integrate your core beliefs into practice. When I speak with a person of color I don't see color. However, this may not be the same for many others in our system. This is the problem. I don't have a magic bullet, on how to detect teachers with bias and prevent them from entering into our system, but we need to work on reducing bias and prejudice in our board especially working with teachers to help them identify their biases and prejudice and how to work on it so that they develop the right kind of ethical and inclusive approach which aligns with Catholic beliefs and practices. You should start from within and how you can incorporate those beliefs: provide helpful tools through constant reflection. It got to be embedded as a curriculum expectation. We should revise the strategy but it should be embedded into the curriculum because as it is now the equity and inclusivity strategy seems like an add-on (TDC6, 11 December, 2014).

One can identify from the interviews that there are contrasting tendency among teachers in terms of personal bias and prejudice towards minority especially LGBT and Black students. There are teachers who see themselves as having an open attitude to the LGBT but find it hard getting along with Black students. On the other hand, there are teachers who identify in themselves a strong openness to the Black students but still feel uncomfortable working with LGBT students. There are others who do not see any limitations in this area with regard to their ability to be transformational leaders in school and there are others who feel themselves ill-equipped to deal with the prejudice which they have carried from their own social

context. One of the teachers who feel himself having openness towards the LGBT but finds it hard dealing with Black students explained his situation this way:

Limitations in myself? For sure, yes.... I don't find any limitations as far as the LGBT community is concerned but I do find myself sometimes having a very difficult time with some of our black students who have been fresh-started to the school. I think there's something that needs to take place because there are an overwhelming number of kids who are fresh-starters who are black for whatever reason many things took place in their lives somewhere else and they carry that wound to the school. But, there's nothing in between going here and being expelled from one school and going to a new school. I find myself not well-equipped, not confident enough to breach the aggression or whatever else is needed in their negative response. Often times school is tough for them... the year has started, the semester has started and the students are always at a disadvantage when they come in.. you know, into that situation. So yes, I definitely find myself limited in that... maybe culturally, maybe not confident enough – and I've been teaching a long enough time and I still don't like what I see in myself." (CN4, 18 December, 2014).

Another teacher represents a total lack of understanding of what equity and diversity education means in terms of the proposal for respecting the multicultural composition of the school. CN 5 for example proposes that equity education and multiculturalism is not necessary because every teacher wants their students to succeed and so should work hard to bring that about through appropriate pedagogy. According to her she treats every student equally and does not think that students should be treated differently because of their color or their sexual orientation. She puts her perspective this way in the interview:

I don't like the question of personal bias and prejudice because I think that I treat every kid the same. It doesn't matter who they are. Yes, I am equipped. Would I do it separately? You try to be sensitive to all people not just one group of people. I am for equality and not for equity because we are all the same. We should not isolate one group for special treatment because that is what you call segregation (CN 5, 16 December, 2014).

Another teacher respondent observed that people might find him biased or suffering prejudice because he is a maths teacher and follow a standardised pedagogy. He pointed out his doubt as to how an inclusive or non-inclusive culture in the school affects learning maths or science. He thinks that the blame is either on bad teachers or bad students or on both. The blame is not on the school environment because for him the environment is the classroom which is not really a playground etc. He speaks further on this:

Well, I teach math so it's pretty black and white and brown and every other color in the rainbow, which is nice because it is the language of everybody. Science has a universal language so I cannot make Maths LGBT or Black or Brown; it is what it is. Where I come from, I grew up in Scarborough. I grew up and I went to Jean Vanier so I grew up with a lot/had a lot of black friends growing up and... I get them; that is I know where they are coming from. I mean I get the culture. I see where a lot of black dudes come from – 'black people'. I understand the culture because I grew up with it. Am I equipped? I'm equipped myself to teach black students in whatever way you say that, that is, but I teach black students by the way I teach all of my students. I essentially teach my style and I do my best to include all of my kids into it but I do not like this language of treating people differently in class because you may encourage laziness (CN2, interview on 15 December, 2014).

The respondents often point to their personal bias and prejudice and their attempt to overcome it through personal effort. Most of them never pointed me in the direction of how their personal prejudices have been transformed through either the school or board's training program or additional qualification or professional development on equity and diversity in line with the EIE or the CEIE. This is a significant point of disconnection because the claim is that the board makes available different channels and opportunities for the teachers to develop their skills in creating an inclusive school culture. CN2 argues further on this:

Well I guess with respect to, if we can start with myself... well, I guess the first

thing with respect to the LGBT kids is that, I mean, I don't walk in their shoes, right? So I mean that's number one, I can't empathize. I can't feel what they are feeling and I guess that's one of the hard parts, right? In my class I treat them like everybody else, there's no difference. I try, especially if I know. I try more or less even when I don't know, but if I specifically know. You know when you are talking about your girlfriend or your boyfriend or whatever, or "this girl likes this guy", I'll try and make the comment: "when a girl likes a girl or a guy likes a guy that there's nothing wrong with that". You are trying to come up with an example, whatever the case may be. But again, I don't walk in their shoes. I don't know the struggles they face. I don't know the ridicule they've had to endure, if they've had to endure any. That would be my limitation with respect to that and the board has not provided us training on how to identify these situations. With black students, it's the same thing. I'm not them. I'm not black. I've tried my best to understand where, sometimes, they come from with respect to a majority Anglo-Saxon view on the world, view of education in that sense but again, that's what we have. We have that view of education so we have that to try and get over that because that's how we are hard-wired with school that way (CN 2, 15 December, 2014)

CN 17 (8 December, 2014) gives three reasons why bias and prejudice continue to exist in the Catholic school toward Black students and LGBT students. First, is that CN 17 observed that there are teachers at Community of the Beloved and within the Catholic school who do not accept the idea of multiculturalism which gave birth to the CEIE and the EIE. In CN 17's words, "I think we are in a Catholic school which should represent universality...but I am afraid that there are many teachers and administrators who don't recognize and accept that it's a multicultural setting" (8 December, 2014). The second reason for the pervasive presence of prejudice and bias in the Catholic schools according to CN 17 is that there are teachers and board administrators who hold on to a conservative interpretation of the Catholic teaching on homosexuality and as CN 17 puts it they pretend as if "there are no gay students

here and they hide behind the Catholic religion in that and are afraid to step beyond their beliefs for fear or whatever so the greatest challenge is that – I think of the close-mindedness of teachers and administrators, some of them.” (CN 17, 8 December, 2014). The third reason which CN 17 offers for prejudice and bias in the school board is a lack of honest and open dialogue at the board level and among all stakeholders about the existence of racism in the board and in the wider society and the virus of homophobia. According to CN 17:

I think we need conversation beginning from the board of trustees, the director of education, superintendents, principals, teachers, parents and students. We need to listen to the students and the school council and student leadership group and social justice groups. Bias and prejudice are too hard to change in many people and this will require a lot more than simply sending guidelines and information from the Ministry of Education or the Catholic Board of Education (CN 17, 8 December, 2014).

Another respondent speaks of activities which do not add together into a cohesive programming on prejudice reduction in order to create an inclusive culture, CN 4 argues as follows:

What are the limitations for black students? I don't think we offer them enough as far as subject matter, subject... there's probably not even anything to offer really, other than Black History Month. You know, what is there? There's nothing. I don't see anything. We have One Community. Sure, let's eat foods from different cultures and let's all go up there on stage and dance but what's done after? What's the point of it? That's never presented or discussed. How does that deal with racism and homophobia, your guess is as good as mine (18 December, 2014).

Another teacher, CN 18, says that the challenge of bias should also be seen not simply as individual bias but also the challenge of social class and income inequality. In addition, one has to factor in the bias of teachers within the Catholic system against the Catholic Church and its perceived inflexibility to social change. CN 18 elaborates

more on this point:

The viewpoints of those from privileged class and those who are not privileged are different. But when you look at the wave of immigration; the new immigrants come in and face challenges and when they come to position of privilege they forgot what they had suffered and replicate the social reproduction. Canada is a country of immigrants so White Canadians of today are grand children of immigrants. When we talk about student engagement and students success, if you are not talking about things that affect a particular group then they gonna be disengaged, and this is what bias causes in teachers. I have a formula for students' engagement: the first is subject mastery; what you are teaching. If you are looking from the aspect of teaching religion, I can tell you that there are many teachers who are teaching religion as a non-teachable field and who have bias against Catholic doctrine and they do it as a drudgery and some form of punishment and they teach in such a way that students lack interest and the problem is province wide. So we are dealing with a double jeopardy here (CN 18, 17 December, 2014).

One of the experts (TDC2) with the social justice committee summarizes what I think is the main issue with bias and prejudice among the teachers and administrators. He points out the need for prejudice reduction and development of a social conscience which TDC2 believes is grounded in Catholic social imagination:

We need a program for prejudice reduction in the board. If staff members can demonstrate their acceptance of each other in helping in creating a school culture, the students will be able to believe and act this way. It is a good piece. We had a day of acceptance and prejudice reduction; but it is only one day in the whole school year. What happens for the rest of the year? It is even a bigger question for LGBTQ more than just a day's event. The problem is that racial issue is so damn backward in our board. It has affected our hiring practice. So our hiring practice has to change. You see five years ago we were starting to see a teaching staff and administrative staff that is mildly diverse than what it is. The whole self-examination of bias in the school which teachers need to do is really hard work and a real challenge because it

negatively affects our CEIE strategy if the people who are to implement it are prejudicial against minorities (TDC2, 16 December, 2014).

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter argued that the changing demographics and diversity within the Canadian society offers a great opportunity and myriad challenges to faith-based Catholic education which traditionally offered a mono-cultural approach to education. I showed in this chapter that within the last twenty years there have been several efforts by the Catholic community through the Institute of Catholic Education to develop an evidence-based approach to meeting these challenges and seizing the opportunity presented by the new demographics to develop a uniquely Catholic inclusive education. I analysed the responses from participants in the interviews conducted and the discussions by the focus groups which pointed out that the stakeholders are all too aware of the complex nature of these challenges. I showed that these responses reaffirm the assumptions of the interrogative theoretical framework of this research. I discovered that two most prominent and recurrent challenges are the tension within the school board and among the teachers in the Catholic schools on how to develop a distinctive Catholic approach to addressing the reality of diversity particularly with regard to students from minority groups, LGBT and Black students. The second teething challenge is the bias and prejudice of many teachers and administrators toward these particular minority groups. The good news is that the teachers and administrators are all too aware of these challenges. Every participant in the interviews and focus group discussions want to see a change in the system and a more cohesive, coordinated and creative approach to meeting these challenges. Some of the proposals which they made and some of the developments in the field gained through research and comparison to other school boards will form the basis of our concluding chapter on the reform of the system.

Chapter Six

Summary, conclusions and recommendations for improvement of diversity and multicultural education in Catholic schools

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, key findings are summarised from the study conducted. Some recommendations are then proposed for improving multicultural and diversity education in Catholic schools. Some of these proposals are based on the suggestions made by stakeholders in the course of the field study. It is proposed that the needed transformation of the hitherto Catholic educational mission of catechesis to a more expanded vision of faith-based education as diversity and inclusive formation for citizenship in a pluralistic society should be the goal of education in Catholic schools. These recommendations were also nourished by personal observation and interaction with teachers, students and administrators in the Community of the Beloved and the Catholic School Board.

Recommendations for reform of the present practices of inclusive school culture in the Catholic schools in Ontario include the proposal for the schools to embrace fully an Africentric school culture rather than the introduction of Blacks- only schools; the hiring of a more diverse teaching and administrative staff to reflect the demography of the schools being served by the board; the allocation of more financial and educational resources to help the teachers and administrators; prejudice reduction formation for all stakeholders as well as students, and a reconceptualisation of the mission of faith-based education towards diversity and multicultural education in faith-based setting. This will require a transformative education system which uses different pedagogical and sociological tools and evidence-based data and resources

in the formation of strategies of inclusion. It will also require the development of different skills sets on the part of educators which were hitherto unknown in the Catholic board.

This chapter concludes with a discussion of the contribution of this study and where I think further research should proceed in this area and my own personal reflection on the research.

6.2 Summary of key findings of the study

There are five main findings of this research which are highlighted in this section:

In Chapter One, the historical context of this study was examined. This was done with a view to locate the question of the challenges and opportunities of diversity and multicultural education in the context of the chequered history of Catholic education in the Province of Ontario, Canada.

Chapter Two offered the theoretical framework for this study. It showed different theories proposed for doing a research of this kind in sociology of education. It showed why the interrogative theoretical framework with its claim that school cultures are shaped by everyday practices in the school by stakeholders is an adequate blueprint to guide this research. The interrogative approach frames school culture as emerging through the everyday practices of stakeholders in the school. The school culture also demonstrates tension fields based on the conflict between dominant cultures and marginalised cultures which must be identified and analysed in order to develop strategies for reform. The chapter also reviewed the trajectory of thoughts, theories and practices in this area of study. It was shown that there are three main streams of thought on the question of diversity and multicultural education in Catholic schools. The first is the traditional teaching of the Catholic Church which continues to see Catholic schools as sites for the transmission of

Catholic identity and Catholic culture in the lives of students through an integrated education which brings together classical liberal education with Catholic philosophy of education and doctrines. The second is a school of thought of people who see this form of schooling as passé in the face of cultural pluralism and a multicultural world. Theorists here see the dialectical tension between the traditional approach to Catholic schooling and a more progressive approach to education as an inevitable crisis which will continue unless there is a fundamental change in the mission and identity of Catholic schools. The third group of literature actually dismisses the Catholic education system in the multicultural diversity and social change in Canada. They argue for an end to publicly funded Catholic education in Ontario, the only province in Canada that has kept the status quo intact since the birth of Canada through the North American Act of 1867. It is obvious, as it was shown in Chapter Two, that developing the kind of socio-educational theories and practices which will lead to students' success in Catholic schools is a significant challenge even for theorists and practitioners. The literatures do not offer many solutions to resolving the challenges and often display wide ideologically and confessionally encrusted positions which drive a wedge between these camps making it impossible for a consensus to be reached in charting the way forward. It is within that context that a research such as the one being reported in this thesis seeks to find a middle point in realising the goal of schooling for young Canadians who still have some connection to faith as vital for their integral education.

Chapter Three showed why a school based ethnographic qualitative method for this research was chosen within the interrogative theoretical framework. It identified the research instruments, the focus population and the narrative approach which was adopted for data collection and analysis. It was shown that the chosen school culture will offer a good context to investigate aspects of the diversity and multicultural education in faith-based schooling which was central to this research. School culture is the most decisive piece in equity and inclusive education. The school culture is also seen in Catholic education as the most important aspect of faith formation because it

is only an accepting school community which makes the environment of faith and culture possible.

Chapters Four and Five analysed and presented the data collected and formed the heart of the thesis in many ways because of the key discoveries which were made, i.e.: the first is that the research helped to answer the question which inspired this project in the first place, that is, the challenges which the Catholic school board is facing in implementing the equity and inclusivity strategy of both the school board and the Ontario Ministry of Education. Through this study, it was discovered that there are serious challenges facing Catholic schools in their attempt to implement the CEIE. It was also discovered that there does not exist any scientific study of these challenges nor has the board taken time to explore deeper the socio-cultural causes of these challenges, and their dimensions. The problem is thus perceived as a theological and confessional issue rather than a cultural and anthropological crisis in the appropriation of the mission and goal of Catholic schooling in the midst of frightening social changes in Canada and in the globe. What is going on in the schools are thus a fairly well articulated equity and inclusivity strategy which is heavily theoretical, philosophical and theological in its notion of Catholic culture, and in its interpretation of the rights of the students, and the abstract notions of human nature, dignity and the goal of education. There is thus a presumption that the teachers and administrators have a coherent understanding of the nature of Catholic education and Catholic culture through which an inclusive school culture will emerge. Unfortunately, as this research demonstrates, this presumption is not evidence-based and is far from the reality on the ground.

Secondly, this lack of appreciation of the challenges on the part of the stakeholders blocks the needed commitment to a reform agenda and feeds a reactionary approach to the development of practices of inclusion in the schools. The Catholic schools are thus playing 'catch up' with the public schools and are still struggling to come to terms with what is going on in society and how that affects the schools and the mission of the Church through Catholic schooling. It also leads to what was

discovered as often a perception that equity and inclusivity is only a temporary distraction, a passing social phase which is a reflection of what in some Catholic thinking is seen as a crisis of culture which is opposed to religious beliefs and practices. So, there is no attempt to develop long term and permanent structures to make stable and firm the gains which are being made in some schools within the Catholic school system as well as the best practices which have proven successful at the board level.

The negative perception that the opportunities of diversity and multicultural education in Ontario Catholic schools are not being embraced with the challenges which come with them by teachers, board administrators and school administrators was very significant and palpable in stakeholders responses in the course of this research. There is also the perception that these challenges are being seen as problems to be solved or to be avoided rather than opportunities to be accepted with joy in the light of the possibilities which they open for the transformation of Catholic education.

Thirdly, at the heart of these challenges is the tension which exists in Catholic educational documents on the mission of Catholic education. Traditionally, Catholic schools were set up for evangelism as catechetical schools where the young were introduced into the doctrines and creed of the Catholic faith with a sprinkling of liberal and classical education and brought up to become committed and practicing Catholics. This is the notion of Catholic education which is still predominant in many parts of the world. However, in culturally diverse countries like Canada and in a province like Ontario where Catholic education is financed through the tax payers' money, this offers considerable challenge for innovation and transformative approaches to Catholic education.

The study found out that teachers and administrators in the Catholic schools do not

fully understand the resources within Catholic social theory which can be explored, interpreted and stretched beyond a restrictive appropriation in developing a truly germane and integrated approach to equity and inclusive education. Thus, the study discovered that there is a great tension within the Catholic board and in schools about what is the correct interpretation of the Catholic educational documents and the teaching from the bishops of Canada and how they diverge or converge with the common curriculum of the Ministry of Education and its EIE protocol and strategy. The deep gulf among the stakeholders in terms of consensus and common practices for realising the CEIE was also noted in the research, which also exposed the frustrations of many teachers and stakeholders.

Fourthly, it was discovered that there are possible reforms which could be identified in school contexts in order to better meet these challenges in the light of the changing demographics of the student population in the schools. There are many Catholic teachers in the schools and at the board office who are committed to equity and inclusion and who have developed some approaches which have been tried and tested in schools. However, these approaches are still disparate and are not properly integrated into the board's slow and often dour approach to these new educational reforms. One of such reforms is the Culture of Catholic Students leadership. It was found out that this annual training which has been the most successful program in the board is unfortunately least appreciated of all the other programs of inclusion. However, as I met with students and discussed with leaders of this program, it was realised that the success of the CEIE in the board will be based in large measure to the extent to which the students become leaders and change agents in the school. Most of the negative realities in the school which make the school culture very challenging for minorities—like stereotyping, bullying, name calling, racial slurs, racism, homophobia, discrimination etc—can change if the students are enlisted in creating safe schools.

Indeed, the mission of the Catholic schools in Ontario as reflected in the seven

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectation places the students at the center of creating and sustaining the school culture. The students are also the ones who are mostly impacted negatively or positively by an unhealthy school culture. But what was also discovered is that the students' attitude, openness to fellow students, and willingness to embrace cultural diversity is the most decisive factor in the socio-education in the schools. This is why giving voice to them in all things and allowing them to assume some form of leadership in creating an inclusive school culture seems to be an important consideration which was discovered is not being given the high priority which it deserves.

Finally, the study found that the monitoring of the implementation of the CEIE in schools is very poor and still very bureaucratic, filled with paper work as if the CEIE monitoring is only about ticking off some boxes. The SMART goals which are measurable with regard to the CEIE still remains far from being simply an idealized vision which has never been achieved in part or in whole in terms of the four benchmarks—increasing student engagement; nurturing our Catholic community, reducing the learning opportunity gap, improving student learning, and student achievement and well being. The *Beyond Catholic Graduation: How Graduates of Ontario Catholic Secondary Schools Live Their Faith* (2013) developed by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and the Catholic Institute for Education is a good start. This annual survey which is usually administered to graduates of Catholic education measures how effective the schools have been in realizing the graduate expectations. The 2013 results showed that the graduates thought that Catholic education helped them to incorporate their Catholic beliefs, values, moral, ethics and guiding life principles in shaping their sense of community and in realizing such goals as—inclusive environment in the school where one could practice the faith; it also encouraged them to practice values of social justice etc.

However, in terms of concrete problems identified in our research like racism, homophobia, bias, sexism etc, the survey does not offer enough optics for seeing how

the school system helped them to deal with these challenges beyond their involvement in volunteering for causes which help the poor and the marginalized, charitable donations, voting and career choice etc. Even though this is a helpful evaluation with limitations, but my research also showed why the Catholic school should not rely on survey of graduates alone in evaluating her CEIE. Evaluation should be ongoing and should be more at the level of practice rather than the rewriting of policies and strategies, because what is written on paper does not necessarily translate into real life. What is important in the final analysis is that Catholic education is oriented to formation of the whole person, the whole culture, and whole context of life; it is education not only on the economy of salvation, but it is built on an ecology of meaning which is inclusive of all persons, and oriented towards human and cosmic flourishing.

This study also helped to answer the research question. The research question was: *What are the challenges and opportunities posed by diversity and multiculturalism to the faith-based education in high schools in an Ontario Separate School Board?*

The data analysed in Chapter Five identified the challenges of developing diversity and multicultural education in faith-based schools in the Ontario separate school system. Some of the challenges identified are the tension between the requirements of the Ministry of Education and Catholic social teaching on equity and diversity. While the Ministry of Education's EIE was a framework around which CEIE was developed, chapter four showed that developing a distinctive Catholic equity and inclusive educational strategy has been a daunting challenge for Catholic schools like Community of the Beloved. The study also successfully showed that despite the challenges facing Catholic schools in implementing the EIE and the CEIE, the Catholic school boards see multiple opportunities amidst the tension to develop new steps and strategies for meeting these challenges. Some of these strategies were identified in chapter four including—adoption of multiple cultural images and symbols in teaching; students' leadership and formation on multicultural living and cultural immersion through student engagement in social justice activities in the

school and in poor neighborhoods, the ongoing formation of teachers on new skills and models for creating inclusive school culture, a more intentional mentoring of students from minority groups beginning with the orientation programme at the beginning of the school year and for new students among other approaches. The reform which are proposed in this chapter were identified through practitioners' perspectives as the research sought to make recommendations not only based on literature reviews, observable social facts in the course of my ethnographic field work, but also through listening to the teachers and administrators in what they thought was needed to bring about changes in the system.

6.3 Recommendations

6.3.1 Catholic schools should adopt inclusive school culture rather than pursue Africentric-only schooling

When the debate began in the public school system in 2010, with the creation of Toronto's first Blacks-only school, many people in the separate school boards (Catholic) dismissed this approach as not being a useful reform of the school system in Ontario. The question then was whether this approach was a regressive approach and a new form of segregation. Catholic school boards then rejected this approach claiming that the best approach to multicultural and diversity education in Ontario is that the schools should represent the experience of society, and that the school will become a mirror for society as well and live fully the Catholic educational identity and value. The argument was that the psycho-social development of adolescents requires an identity formation which is sustained and mediated through a socialisation into the diverse cultural context of the environing context of their social and personal life. But there were other voices which challenged the Catholic schools to consider such Africentric-only schools as a way of meeting the EIE of the Ministry of Education.

The decisive point which was gathered from personal observation is that the need for Africentric schooling emerged because minorities especially Black students were failing through the cracks; their rate of retention was declining, and the students feel

a deep sense of alienation and disconnect between what happens in the school and their real world outside the school. The school culture thus becomes a source of disempowerment and reinforces their sense of marginality. The idea of an inclusive school culture which caters to the needs of the historically marginalized and under-achieving students becomes exigent in faith-based schools.

It is an ideal which requires a shift not only in the educational system but also in the way people see and relate with each other in the educational setting. The concern for reform of the education system in the Catholic school board with regard to creating an inclusive school culture should be about how the board can create a culture of learning that is for instance Afrocentric not only to reflect the experience of Black students, but also to widen the horizon of meaning for all students through a culture of real encounter, where school identity is not simply an idealized notion of community but an experiential celebration of the dignity of difference through daily activities and programs which are inclusive in content and shape. The following recommendations are proposed for reform of the Catholic educational system in Ontario:

6.3.2 Catholic schools should hire more teachers to reflect the diversity of the schools

An essential part of the reform of the system, noted in discussion with teachers and administrators, is the need to hire more teachers from the minority groups to reflect the diversity of the students' population. There is no diversity in the staff of the board or schools and this makes it impossible for any reform to take place if the models presented to students are color-coded. The need to resolve this problem is very urgent even in a school like Community of the Beloved that is presented as the model of diversity and inclusion which has only one black teacher on the staff of over 100 teachers, support staff, administrators and special education assistants.

6.3.3 Catholic schools ought to work together to bridge the gap between theory and practice

The need to bridge the gap between theory and practice was constantly brought up in the focus groups especially by school chaplains and heads of department of faith-based education in various high schools under the board. The emphasis on cultural proficiency as a way of improving practice was constant. However, respondents in the TA group were quite convinced and strong in suggesting that the bridge between theory and practice cannot occur. This is because most members of the Board of Trustees who set the mission and policy of the Catholic board and supervise its implementation are not teachers.

There are four main areas from conversation and encounters with the teachers, students, parents and administrators which I propose could help address this challenge and bring about an inclusive school culture: The first has to do with writing the curriculum and the development of the strategy of inclusion. All stakeholders—students, parents, pastors, teachers, school administrators, board administrators, politicians, board of trustee members should be involved. Another way of integrating theory to practice will be in terms of bringing the stories from the students' life to the classroom and schools. The CEIE is still very theoretical and Eurocentric and often does not represent the worldview of the students or reflect their experience. Practice should feed theory and theory should be informed by practice. This means that 'the critical incidents' should be seen as positive signs of the tension in the system emerging from the diverse experiences of the students and teachers. A punitive approach to dealing with conflict should be abandoned because these disciplinary incidents are only portraits of the diverse experiences of the student. Teachers must be open to listening to the personal stories of the students as well as the school, classroom and personal experiences of the teachers. The CEIE should emerge from these stories and be enriched by them in order to be evidence-based and not simply be a generic construct

taken from Catholic doctrines or Ministry of Education's guidelines. This will help the board overcome the suspicion between administrators and teachers on the front

lines and the perception that the equity and inclusive program is an imposition which lacks contextual reference.

6.3.4 Form teachers and school administrators on the practices of inclusion

Another recommendation for improvement is the formation of the teachers and administrators on practices for creating, sustaining and maintaining an inclusive school culture. Formation is not simply through the teaching of theories on diversity, equity and multiculturalism but some professional development and integration of best practices tailored to the specific demographics of the areas where the schools are situated and built around the specific socio-cultural and economic challenges facing each area. Formation should also involve mentoring of younger teachers by older teachers, through three ways: case-studies, problem-solving, and examining best practices in the field. In that sense, there should not be one-rule-fits all formation for teachers; while board-wide workshops and training for teachers and administrators should continue, a more school-specific and teacher-specific formation should be encouraged. These approaches will help teachers, administrators and other stakeholders to understand the specific and contextual nature of formation for a particular school environment and demographics.

Another aspect of this formation should be an ongoing collaboration, meeting, and dialogue among the teachers themselves in order to peer-review different approaches being adopted and coordinate a more creative and coherent programming for creating an inclusive culture. There was also the perspective that the formation of the teachers could best be served by giving them a comprehensive introductory training on equity and diversity once they are hired before they go into any school or into the classrooms. It should be a required training for every new teacher. Formation of teachers should also involve an annual training on equity and inclusive education based on findings from annual equity evaluation. In addition, posting of teachers to schools should be done with consultation and conversation between teachers and administrators so that the character and identity of each

school are taken into consideration relative to the qualities and skills set of new teachers who are coming into the board.

Another aspect of the reform will be increasing collaboration among teachers in departments and in the school community. As we noted in chapter four, many of the approaches adopted by teachers for realizing the CEIE are based on personal interest and preference. Again, many teachers still presume that the CEIE because it speaks of Catholic education is all about faith-based education. The departments in the schools as well as in the board do not work together on the CEIE. For improving the system, there is need for more integration and collaboration among all the departments because the whole goal of the CEIE is to create an inclusive school culture.

Formation and dialogue as a needed reform was consistent in most of the responses from the teachers. I observed that teachers really want their voices to be heard beyond the legalistic protection which they have through the teachers' union. In order to fully implement the CEIE while achieving high rating from the Ministry of Education in its Policy Program Memorandum 119, there is need to dialogue and also hear the voices of teachers and students. The importance of dialogue and hearing the voices of teachers and students cannot be over-emphasised. Even in the documents from the Catholic bishops of Ontario, there is a strong emphasis on dialogue. However, there is a general consensus among respondents that that there can be no dialogue among all the stakeholders—members of the board of trustees, administrators at the school board and parents—if people are stubbornly holding on to their own positions.

6.3.5 Budgetary reallocation of funds to urban schools

The need to allocate more funds to inner-city schools to support equity and inclusive education cannot be over-emphasised. This is also an essential part of the reform which I propose based on the input from respondents. One of the board

superintendants (TDC6) makes this case in a very convincing way:

This has to be foundational as the forefront as the lens through which we make decision; from an equity perspective when we assign dollars to school for budget we go to a new model that provides funds for schools in low social economic area and we look at the data. More funds to schools which do not have the capacity to fund-raise to try to balance up a little bit; we factor in social demographics indicator in assigning vice principal; to bring equity to the system in that regard. Equity and diversity educational leadership program to help them to become better administrators and the teachers; we hope to put in place principals in schools in how they set the school up and how they organise the teaching staff and the program staff adopt for realizing the CEIE and how they make strides in this particular area but it will require reallocating resources (TDC6, 18 December, 2014).

These days there is a big pressure on Catholic school boards to cut down budget because the school board has come under increasing scrutiny from the provincial government about cost-cutting measures. Also there is the pressure about the relevance of publicly funded Catholic schools if those schools are perceived to be reluctant in implementing the province-wide educational reform called for by the EIE. In order to meet the many challenges facing the school board, more funds should be allocated for in-service training of teachers and administrators. More resources should be put in the formation of teachers, and in promoting programs and school based evidence-gathering in order to get the input of students and especially the minorities. Funding should be applied to creating forums for parent-teacher relations. In addition, the school board's budget must also take into consideration the allocation of funds for in-set training of teachers and further education and scholarship for teachers in the school board as well as research development and innovative thinking and design and the provision of resources for creating an inclusive school culture using sources from other faith traditions.

As at this time, the main resources for CEIE have been those provided for chaplaincies in faith-based education since the chaplains are tasked with many of the social justice activities of the school board and individual schools. Some of these resources which are available for the chaplaincies include: *The Collegeville Prayer of the Faithful* by Michael Kwatera; *Worlds for the Journey* by Lisa Freemantle and Less Miller; *The Gift of the memory: A Keep sake to Commemorate the Loss of a loved One* by Marrienne Richmond;

The Next place by Warren Hason for divorced couples; *Gifts of Love: A Collection of Prayers Services for Teachers and Administrators*; *500 Prayers for Young People* by Martin Saunders; *The Twelve Gifts for Healing* by C. Contanzo; *The Enduring Gift: Catholic Education in the Province of Ontario*; *Faith Clips* by Robert E. Barron: *General Directory of Catechesis*. These are resources from the Catholic Church. If the board's open access policy is to be taken as valid, it must also enrich its equity and inclusive education especially from the faith-based education perspective through sources from other faith traditions.

Furthermore, the board ought to include sources from other social justice groups outside the Catholic tradition. It is also important to engage these sources as dialogue partners in expanding what the church offers. In addition, just as the board provides all these resources for faith-based education, it needs to even do more for other departments in terms of what teachers need in creating an inclusive school culture in their respective classrooms beyond curricular reform or equity pedagogy. There are many resources on prejudice reduction which can be introduced for teachers and daily practices in the school life which can be taught through these programs. This is why more budgetary allocation is needed for increasing the funding of other inclusive education programs beyond what is presently being offered through the school chaplaincies.

Some of the areas where additional funding should be allocated will be some of the most successful programs for training students as agents for creating an inclusive

school culture—the students’ leadership program—which had been adopted by the Catholic school board. It is important to prioritize practices that work and which have proven successful in the schools. One of such programs is the students’ leadership program. The rationale for these student leadership programs is that the students are the best suited in bringing about an inclusive culture—stamping out bullying in school, homophobia, racism and prejudice against minorities among other challenges facing students. The programs identified by TDC5 an expert at the Catholic school board which need to be promoted are SMILE (from the Scarborough Multicultural Interdisciplinary Leadership Experience); Inclusion and Belonging Retreat; and the Catholic Student leadership Impact Team through the Camp Olympia summer program. What these programs do is that they are proactive rather than being a board reactionary approach to social policies from the Ministry of Education. However, the challenge is that programs like these are often seen with suspicion by some members of the Board of Trustees as the breeding ground for gay rights activism and anti-Catholic social programs. This is why greater conversation is needed between teachers on the frontlines and the Board of Trustees so that board policies are evidence-based drawing from the perspectives of teachers and the experience of the students especially those on the margins.

6.3.6 Form teachers on the skills needed for diversity and multicultural education in faith-based setting

One of the teachers at Community of the Beloved in response to the question about possible reform of the school in order to bring about a more inclusive school culture, pointed at what I think is the core challenge facing Catholic schools which needs to be addressed. CN 30 puts it this way; “I think you want to be faithful to our religion and to our gospel, I know it sounds corny, and at the same time understand that not everybody still has the same beliefs as we do and not to sort of discard their beliefs, but somehow make them feel that I respect their beliefs as much as you respect mine” (CN 30, 8 December, 2014).

This is a very important point to consider as fundamental in developing an effective strategy of inclusion in the faith-based Catholic schools. There are different research findings on this which are often opposed to each other. There are those who hold that religious schools are by nature insular schools which are often confessional and mono- cultural in nature and identity. This view is well represented in the following articulation by Mark, A. Pike (2008):

Many religious believers find that they cannot give pluralism their unequivocal support because endorsing a range of lifestyles (rather than prescribing more narrowly how one should live) is no more neutral than the teaching in churches that declares some ways of living sinful and other ways pleasing to God. Pluralism is considered by liberals to be the most rational response to diversity but this can discriminate against those who sincerely believe that some ways of living are morally acceptable and others are not. (Pike, 2008: 116).

There are those who argue especially in Catholic education that Catholicism within any educational system is open to diversity and inclusion. Mario D'Souza (2000), a leading Canadian Catholic philosopher of education argues that it is possible for Catholicism to maintain a classical liberal and humanistic education. Such education will provide a harmony between different contending traditional-progressive camps in the search for a model of inclusion in faith-based schools in a multicultural society like Canada. He grounds this possibility in traditional Catholic educational philosophy on the capacity of reason to attain the truth about the intrinsic unity and beauty of the human person and the commonality which people share in terms of their desire for acceptance, for freedom, and autonomy and for integration in well adjusted and well functioning society. He argues further:

From the perspective of Christian faith-based education, liberal and humanistic education secures the foundation upon which one may secure the crucial relationship between faith and culture. Such an edifice refuses any simple division between intellectual and academic culture on the one hand, and between religious and a faith culture on the other. A sound liberal and humanistic education also prevents the bifurcation of the human person. Faith and culture—intellectual, moral, religious,

social, political--stress the unity of the human person at all levels of knowing. Such a unity is integral to the life of a liberal and humanistic education. The power of a liberal education is that it confirms the unity of the human person, both personally and communally. A sound liberal and humanistic education must always aim at unifying the experience of the student, and it does so by recognizing the stages of mental and moral growth and the gradual ascendancy of the educational process" (D'Souza, 2000:17).

But beyond the two polar positions of a mono-cultural religious ideal or a religious ideal which is open to accommodating other voices, lies the need for a third way. This is what Charles Taylor (1992) meant when he writes on the importance of dialogue in the formulation of inclusive approaches which should guide society:

The monological ideal seriously underestimates the place of the dialogical in human life. It wants to confine it as much as possible to the genesis. It forgets how our understanding of the good things of life can be transformed by our enjoying them in common with people we love; how some goods become accessible to us only through such common enjoyment....Thus my working out my own identity doesn't mean that I work it out in isolation, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others. This is why the development of an ideal of inwardly generated identity gives a new importance to recognition. My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others. (Taylor, 1992: 33-34).

Catholic educators must be open to dialogue in working out how faith-based education will look in the cultural pluralism of the times. The goal of reform is for the Catholic school to live out what it actually professes in her educational documents. There are already many indications of the changing context and meaning of faith-based education as understood in Ontario, Canada. *The Ontario Catholic Elementary Curriculum Policy Document for Faith-based Education* recognizes the importance of the needed integration between Catholic educational philosophy and the philosophical permutations of Canadian educational goals: "What specifies faith-

based education is its school-centered context, where students are being introduced to a critical and systematic assimilation of culture” (Faith-based Education, 2012: 13).

Three aspects, among others, are needed in order to fully implement this reform vision. First is conscious effort at integration of a religious component in all learning in the Catholic school with “other elements of the students’ knowledge and education” (Faith-based education, 2012: 13). This means that the students should see themselves and their history within the context of the school. This is the only way they can participate in being enriched and also in enriching the school culture. Second, teachers and administrators must make a conscious effort at interdisciplinary approaches to faith-based education which must include different approaches to critical social analysis and educational practices which help to create a new narrative of inclusion and belonging. Third, teachers and administrators must make conscious daily effort to apply and appropriate new methods and new information which will lead to transformation of the cognitive, praxis and affective domains. The goal is to achieve a threefold reform which must embrace (a) participation through experience in the lives of each other by all members of the school; (b) application and appropriation of new information and new approaches beyond what is offered in Catholic educational documents; (c) exploration of new ideas, concepts and insights in creating an inclusive and safe school culture (Faith-based Education, 2012: 17).

In a major study commissioned by the National Catholic Education Association in Washington, DC, USA, the authors concluded that fidelity to Gospel values means that Catholic educators have resources within Catholicism, especially her social justice teaching, to explore the possibilities of embracing equity and diversity education (Shane, 2007: 1). Using the paradigm of 1 Corinthians 12: 4 where St Paul speaks of varieties of gifts, this report looks at diversity from the perspective of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The study highlighted that there could exist a hidden curriculum through Catholic doctrines which somehow may constitute an obstacle to creating a faith-

based education that is inclusive. In every school, there is both an explicit curriculum and what Philip Jackson (1968) referred to as the hidden curriculum. The hidden curriculum consists of the values, beliefs and messages we give our students in the informal, non-instructional areas that permeate the entire school culture. In the light of this, the study proposes (Shane, 2007: 24):

All students need to be able to "see themselves" in some way in the school culture. If ethnic minority students are unable to see themselves in the school's curriculum or activities, composition of the faculty or staff, or the school culture, then school can become a distancing place. Every student has the right to feel connected to the school, to feel some sense of ownership, that this is "my" school.

What all these point to is the need for Catholic educators to rethink the content and mission of faith-based education and the overall goal of the educational enterprise for the church in pluralistic societies like Canada. Multicultural faith-based education should be a transformational process of building holistic relations in a community of shared life through inclusive love among students and teachers from diverse ethnic, racial, cultural, social, and sexual backgrounds. As we noted in Chapter Five, what comes to mind to many stakeholders in Catholic education in Ontario was the creation of a community. In his seventh principle for anti-racism education, prominent Canadian theorist on equity and diversity in education, George Dei (1996), also highlighted how the reform in schools can take place in order to create an inclusive school community:

The idea of inclusive schooling sees schools as 'working communities' in that the powerful notions of 'community' and 'social responsibility' are brought from the margins into the centre of the processes of delivering education. Today, it is tempting to say 'no one knows what community means anymore.' But surely, 'community' must mean something. The notion of schools as 'working communities' means that schools should teach the values fundamental to a working community. Schools should seek peaceful co-existence among students, teaching staff, school administrators, parents and

local communities through instilling mutual respect, collective work and collective responsibility” (Dei, 1996 :33).

The goal of multicultural faith-based education in a Catholic school is to create a healthy, helpful and hopeful school culture. This is with the aim of securing a safe school where every student and teacher in the Catholic school can fulfill their vocation in life and attain human fulfillment for their integral good and the greater good of the community. Diversity and multicultural faith-based education must be pursued by all stakeholders as a holistic formation for teachers, students, and the entire school or faith community, aiming at helping all involved to embrace the dignity of differences which defines our being-in-the-world today. It should be lived in such a way that every member of the community finds fulfillment in the community. It should equip students and teachers with an integrated faith, and ongoing skills for meeting the challenges of cultural and ethical pluralism and the fast-paced social changes of contemporary society. In order to be part of this reform movement, teachers and administrators must become self-critical of their own bias and racial or homophobic blinkers, and should make conscious attempt at formation on social justice, equity, reduction of prejudice, and critical attentiveness, sensitivity and solidarity. These are particularly helpful in their relationship with those who still consider themselves outsiders in our schools as a result of their place of origin, accent, gender, color, ethnicity, sexuality, faith, family history, social inequity and the lasting effects of social reproduction.

These lofty goals which I propose are grounded in Catholic social theory, but they also meet what Nieto and Bode, (2008) so clearly articulated as the goal of school reform for realizing the goal of diversity and multicultural education in a democratic

society. According to them, multicultural education in any democratic and pluralistic society should be:

...a process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender among others) that students, their communities, and teachers reflect. Multicultural education permeates the schools' curriculum and instructional strategies as well as the interactions among teachers, students, and families, and the very way that schools conceptualize the nature of teaching and learning. Because it uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflection, and action (praxis) as the basis for social change, multicultural education promotes democratic principles of social justice, (Nieto and Bode, 2008:44).

Nieto and Bode further identify five reforms of the school for creating an inclusive culture which can be appropriated in the practical realization of the goals of the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations (Nieto and Bode, 2010), namely: (i) school reform should be anti-racist and anti-bias; (ii) school reform should reflect an understanding and acceptance of all students as having talents and strengths that can enhance their education; (iii) school reform should be considered within the parameters of critical pedagogy; (iv) teachers, families, students need to be meaningfully involved in school reform; (v) school reform needs to be based on high expectations and rigorous standards for all learners. (Nieto and Bode, 2010: 399-415).

Each Catholic school board interprets and appropriates its own version of multicultural faith-based education and how to integrate these dimensions in creating an inclusive school culture. In the Catholic school board under study, one of the superintendents (TDC3) told me in an interview that they adopt an 'open access

approach' to multiculturalism. Open access means that the board admits all students no matter their religion or faith perspective. Open access reflects the very heart of Catholicism's universality. As part of the open-access approach, TDC 3 drew attention to the board's vision of constantly making available to the teachers all the tools which they need to successfully implement the CEIE of the board. He pointed out that multiculturalism, equity and inclusive education is carried out in the board through what he calls, "alternative faith-perspective through a Catholic social imagination." This means, for him, that what is offered to the students must maintain the Catholic identity of the school, while being faithful to the policies and protocol of the Ministry of Education on Equity and Inclusive Education (TDC3, 11 December, 2014). This recommendation is hinged on the conviction of this thesis that the equity strategy from the Ministry of Education is quite close to the central values of Catholic social teaching: love God and love your neighbors, and treat others as you would like to be treated. The EIE offers a good moral perspective, which is the core of Catholic educational curriculum in an age-appropriate way.

This is, however, the challenge that the school board needs to address. The impression is given in the schools that multicultural issues and concerns about racism and homophobia and poverty should be handled only in the context of faith-based education. This seems to be the impression of many teachers. However, as the focus group of chaplains at the school board (TA, 18 December, 2014) noted in the discussion, faith-based education as such does not furnish every teacher with similar religious faith or perspective on equity and inclusion. Furthermore, there is the concern about how people separate themselves from imposing their own perspective or emotional attachment to a particular social issue on others in such a way as to make room for dialogue. FGTA1 in general agreed that the reform needed is a rethinking of what a diversity and multicultural religiously informed inclusive culture will look like in a Catholic school along these lines: (i) how do you have people put aside their own bias and racism when dealing with people of other cultures? Everybody sees the problem in the board from their own mindset and

nobody wants to step out; there must be compromise for equity and diversity to exist. (ii) how to address the lack of knowledge on the part of administrators and teachers who are not well grounded in their Catholic faith, especially Catholic Social teaching, and in the theories and practices of inclusion and thus lack the foundational knowledge to either understand the EIE or the CEIE and how to implement them in the school; (iii) the challenge of inadequate human resources because of budgetary cuts to programs in the CEIE which the trustees do not consider a priority to maintaining the Catholic identity of the schools; (iv) the educators are biased and lacking in so many ways and are often driven by personal, political and ideological interest (TA, 18 December, 2014).

What the focus group drew attention to but did not have the tools to fully articulate is what Benedicta Egbo (2009) calls diversity-oriented leadership (DOL). This reform requires change in orientation as well as in theory and practice by giving educational leaders the skills they need to create an inclusive school culture and implement needed reform for leading in diverse educational environments (Egbo, 2009: 194).

She proposes that DOL—whether it is transformative or eclectic, emancipatory or liberative or solely with the goal of providing an inclusive platform for learning in the schools—must advocate and develop skills needed for social justice and diversity. DOL teachers and administrators are change agents who understand what is going on in the lives of their students and are confident in bringing changes in the school culture by recognizing and consciously working to heal the power differentials in the school among different groups that make up the school community.

DOL leaders see redemptive possibilities in social structures and do not see non-dominant students in terms of at-risk students or as minorities. Rather they are attentive to the voices of the non-dominant groups and all stakeholders in the school, institutionalize changes, engage in critical self and group reflection on social justice issues, and are open to divergent opinions in problem-solving. They also see the bigger picture through regular equity and diversity audits and constant growth,

improvement and transformation of the system (Egbo, 2009: 194-197). How the skills for DOL can be developed in Catholic schools is the focus of these concluding proposals.

6.3.7 Recommended skills to achieve the CEIE goals of inclusive school culture

My recommendation in terms of how to develop skills needed for diversity and multicultural education within the faith-based Catholic schools include: skills for community hermeneutic of multiplicity in an accepting school community where everyone is treated as the Beloved—which are relational skills, communicative skills, and implemental skills.

The first skill is an interpretative approach for creating a community hermeneutic of multiplicity for the community of the Beloved. The interrogative theoretical framework which we adopted for this research is based on the critical and conflictual tension among different cultures in the school which are sites of power plays. To be able to interpret and change the system, teachers must learn how to read cultures through the lives of their students. Charles Foster and Theodore Brelsford (2007) propose that “diversity and multicultural religious formation requires skills for negotiating cross-cultural exchanges and the ability to live with ambiguity and discomfort required in order to form tolerant and inclusive faith-based communities” (Foster & Brelsford, 2007: 209). A community hermeneutic they propose is achieved among a people who are mutually involved in reciprocal learning of what constitutes existential meaning for each other, and what touches them ultimately. In addition, such a faith-based learning community seeks to constantly learn from every member especially on how the forces of history are affecting students’ success and the realization of the human potentials of students.

Developing a community hermeneutic of multiplicity will require cultural proficiency on the part of administrators and teachers. This way, teachers will embrace the multiple narratives of all those within the learning environment, and be open to

constant development of the skillfulness, knowledge and mindfulness to be culturally competent and proficient through an intentional immersion in the world of every member of the community, especially those on the margins. The capacity to listen to students must be instilled in the teachers, especially reinforcing the virtues of humility and the mission to the vulnerable identified in the L'Arche communities, which is a key resource in the Catholic school board.

A key component of the needed change is how to help teachers and administrators in the Catholic board to learn how their students communicate their cultural identity in their interaction in the school with teachers and fellow students—their facial expression, their way of dressing, accent, language, and their ways of learning all reveal their social location and their worldview. Thus entering into the world of the students could begin through healthy interaction, open invitation to share, or honest questions which are positive and non-judgmental in content and structure. While culture is multiple, complex and variable, there is a certain pattern to particular cultural traditions transmitted consciously and unconsciously through cultural knowledge, artifacts, and behaviors as well as through cultural modeling. Interactions with other cultures must be seen by the Catholic school board and the teachers and administrators as a resource for understanding what is going on within the community of faith-filled learners; behaviors should be judged in relation to cultural context, and social and cultural symbols and identities which could generate tensions and prejudice should be understood and engaged with sensitivity, mindfulness and empathy.

Foster and Brelsford argue that cultural learning within the community of faith is a hermeneutic of multiplicity as each individual engages the other person with openness and respect, trying to be enriched through this learning, and actively negotiating change within and beyond the walls of separation and alienation. It is

important to underlie the importance of creating dynamic and inclusive communities of faith where such hermeneutics of multiplicity can take place within the educational system.

Indeed, the fundamental goal or objective of the Catholic school should be how to tell the story of the faith in such a way that the students enter into the story of God, insert their own narrative within that story and see themselves in the stories of God's great deeds. In addition, every member of the school community must be encouraged to learn each other's stories with a view to seeing how these stories merge in the ever-expanding narrative of God's love and work in personal and group history. Education should be seen as part of this immersion into the story of what God is doing in the world of knowledge—liberal arts, social sciences, science, technology, etc. The multiple stories of God discovered in the individual and communal narratives become a way of envisaging a community hermeneutic of multiplicity which is governed by what Parker Palmer calls 'the grace of greater things.' Palmer sees such a community as one in which there is:

Face to face relationship with each other as human beings. In education especially, this community connects us with the...'great things' of the world, and with 'the grace of great things'...We are in community with all these great things and great teaching is about knowing that community, feeling that community, sensing that community, and then drawing the students into it. (Palmer, 1998: 106-107).

The commitment to the truth and the 'grace of great things' becomes the nexus for the community in education because it gives room to diversity, contemplation of the supremacy of truth as mystery, ambiguity, creative conflict, honesty, humility and

authentic freedom. When people feel genuinely embraced by their communities of faith and learning, there is a “blissful fusion of opposites, a transcending of the old contrary things in the newly created space of encounter” (Bekker & Ter Avest, 2009: 140). Bekker and Avest using the works of Emmanuel Levinas sees an ideal community of diversity and multiculturalism within a faith-based institution as one that is governed by ‘immanent transcendence’ which reflects the spiritual dimension in genuine human encounter in the community and in the classrooms. What is significant in such a community is that we stop seeing the other as ‘just like me but different’ but rather that we are open to the otherness of the other. In this kind of community, everyone is learning from the other, people lose their attachment to a single narrative of culture, faith, traditions, and worldviews in order to encounter a new reality of love and friendship from the other. This requires that each member of the community should be treated as a subject of love. According to Palmer (1998: 120) in such a community of subjects of love, students are introduced in the classrooms to:

A world larger than their own experiences and egos, a world that expands their personal boundaries and enlarges their sense of community. This is why students often describe great teachers as people who ‘bring to life’ things that the students had never heard of, offering them an encounter with otherness that brings the students to life as well.

The second skill needed is relational leadership. Mark Branson (Branson, 2007: 22) notes that relational leaders intentionally work towards weaving new relational networks within the faith-based learning context as well as relationships within the wider community. Faith-based educational ministries in schools are always engaged in public hermeneutics because when they establish strong and inclusive bonds of relationship in their communities they often preach a Gospel message to the wider community on how to build a better society. Relationship skills will require of teachers to develop capacity to listen and create a safe space and school culture where students for instance can be themselves and speak freely of what is going on

in their lives, their doubts, fears, the threats they face (for instance bullying, demotivation etc) among other factors. Relational teaching in schools is both a process and praxis because it involves inter-cultural understanding, border-crossings, building respectful and caring relationships modeled after the Trinity. It flourishes through a praxis governed by dialogue and healthy interactions through graced mutually self-mediating subject-subject relationship between teachers and students and among the students themselves. Respectful relationship and honest interaction change both parties, their cognitive environment is changed, the school culture is expanded through a new experience of divine love, and renewed appreciation of the giftedness of each person, and wider horizon of human and divine opportunities inherent in this kind of positive relationship.

The third skill needed is about implementation. This is the qualities needed in every teacher so that Catholic schools could move from talking about equity and inclusion and debating about diversity and multiculturalism in the Catholic schools to actually doing the heavy lifting needed to improve practice. Teachers who wish to create a faith-based inclusive school and who are interested in diversity and multicultural education should be concerned with shaping and reshaping the structures, programs, symbols, stories and activities in their teaching and learning methods. This is with a view to aligning them to the generative meanings and relationships that have arisen through interpretative and relational work. This requires a fundamental shift in approach.

Presently, the common curriculum used in faith-based education and family life teaching in the Catholic schools in Ontario (2012) is very generic and still reflect a transmission-oriented curriculum designed to be delivered in what Darling-Hammond calls 'impersonal factory-model or cargo-based' totally packaged Catholic schools that passed student off from one teacher to the other from year to year (Darling-Hammond, 2010: 4-5). Implemental skills requires that faith-based

diversity and multicultural education be carried out by teachers who are well formed in the process and praxis of prejudice reduction, integration of the curriculum through the use of examples, symbols, and analogies which draw from and is reflective of the stories of their students. Such teachers should be trained by the board on how to link effective teaching practices to cultural context, and how to locate their teaching modules within the cultural world of their students and in the wider story of God's dealing with humanity in history.

The participants in the focus group at Community of the Beloved (TC, 15 December, 2014) highlighted four aspects where implemental leadership could help in reforming the system, namely: (i) the integration of the curriculum in such a way that the spirituality of Catholicism is seen to be consistent with the CEIE rather than ad-on to the EIE; (ii) the bridging of the gap between what is going on in the school and what the board is proposing which often leads to teachers ticking off on the list of variable-checks for equity (so-called equity registers) while giving half-hearted response to the strategies proposed; (iii) building better teacher-student relationship which can help teachers and administrators as well as parents to monitor the personal growth and development of the students; (iv) multicultural faith-based education within which the CEIE is being implemented more as a lived experience and as a way of life in the school rather than a series of activities and programs which sometimes may not be properly integrated. The goal is that students should become well integrated students and as one of the participants said; "We do not need gay clubs in our school; we do not need Africentric space in our school; our school environment is inclusive, it is our culture here" (FGA6, 15 December, 2014).

In addition, the schools should be given a free hand to be dynamic in applying some innovative strategies which work for particular schools without being micro-managed by the board which fuels a climate of suspicion. This means that the goal of implementation is about bringing about a transformative education through creating

an inclusive school culture which is contextual in nature. Gerald Grace sees transformational educational leaders as those who work collaboratively to remove undesirable features of schooling culture and prejudice (against particular sex, race, people with disability or who suffer social disadvantages like migrants or First Nations for instance) in order to bring about the transformation of culture and social relations as a shared venture of all stakeholders (Grace, 1997: 54). But implementing the programs for inclusion cannot happen unless the stakeholders are all singing from the same page.

The fourth skill is about communication which will include the language of discourse and the different methods and medium for communicating the inclusive message and vision of the school. All the participants in the focus group at Community of the Beloved (TB 16 December, 2014) agreed that this is the most important reform needed in the Catholic school board. This is because the language used in the school context could heal or hurt the way students perceive themselves. In order to use inclusive language and language of love, friendship and acceptance there needs to be greater interaction, dialogue and exchange of ideas among all stakeholders and using empathetic language which communicate the sense that people care and that people are loved and respected and not judged.

However, the group also noted that the most decisive piece of the puzzle in creating an inclusive school culture is what happens at home. In the triad which is often referenced by participants—school, family, and church community—family was presented as the most decisive. This is also where they identify the most difficult challenge (FGA 7, 16 December, 2014).

The biblical Emmaus experience is a good model here. The hearts of students are touched profoundly when a teacher or a school administrator or even a fellow student communicate to them from one heart to another. Just as Jesus opened the

scriptures to the disciples on the way to Emmaus and stretched their limited understanding of the events and people in their lives, communicative skills in multicultural faith-based education requires teachers to understand and appreciate the dignity of their students as the image and likeness of God. They must be led to appreciate that in reaching out to their students with love and communicating with them with love and respect, they are actually proclaiming the Gospel. I recommend that teachers can communicate better in schools through: (i) personal example of living and believing that diversity and multicultural learning through inclusive schools is a calling from God; (ii) entering into the social context and worldview in which people live as well as the specific nature of the personal stories and situations of people; (iii) entering into the experience of joy and pains in the lives of the students and in the wider community; and (iv) consciousness that the mystery of God's love is always beyond our imagination hence the need to respect every student as an embodiment of the mystery of God's love; as someone made in the image and likeness of God.

Teachers must develop the adaptive skill to enable a rich encounter of divine love at different levels for the students—cognitive, evaluative, symbolic and affective and leading to new level of performative witnessing to the beauty of diversity and the uniqueness of each person's journey into the truth.

However, becoming an inclusive community does not mean becoming less or more Catholic. As Gerald Grace argues, "all faith-based schools are vulnerable to *mission drift* over time, especially when the secular, political and public worlds offer such schools extra resources, status and the accolades of 'excellent,' 'successful' and 'effective' if they meet the requirements of the state" (Grace, 2009: 490). However, faith schools have a dual mission to serve 'God and Caesar.' A major challenge with regard to diversity and multicultural education for Catholic schools in Canada I perceive based on this research and borrowing from the thoughts of Grace is to

maintain appropriate balance between the unique mission of a faith-based school as a place for religious formation and the broader requirements of pluralistic societies (Grace, 2009: 490).

Jackson (2004) has pointed out that a constant challenge in formulating appropriate approaches to multicultural faith-based education is that practitioners have operated with different preconceptions about the nature and aims of the subject (Jackson, 2004: 144-145). Formulating the aims and nature of a Catholic approach to inclusive school culture will require a closer attention to biblical narratives especially with regard to the approaches adopted by the Lord Jesus; it will also take into consideration the progressive and contextual nature of God's engagement with people across different levels of history. My favorite biblical images of multicultural faith-based education are the Pentecost experience, St Peter's visit to Cornelius, and the vulnerable mission of Christ reflected in Philippians 2:1-16. These can be used by the Catholic board in the formation of teachers on practices of inclusion.

In the light of these, it is important that teachers in the Catholic schools expand their understanding of religious formation and the different tectonic shifts in the social and cultural locations of their students today. Diversity and multicultural education grounded in Catholic social justice principles like participation, solidarity, co-operation, gratuity, charity and justice could help Catholic schools link faith-based education to civic engagement, social justice, ecological concerns. It will also reconnect faith-based education with faith-formation as both socialization into an inclusive faith community and an openness to embrace the grace of the greater community in which students live. The aim and nature of faith-based education within which diversity and multiculturalism plays a role will also be connected to understanding the goal of life on earth and the purpose of our common life in a world where the distance between peoples and cultures are shrinking every day.

6.4 Future research

There are three areas where I see future research on diversity and multiculturalism in faith-based schooling in the Catholic Church. The first is in the area of evidence-based theoretical model for quantifying the confessional identity in Catholic schools and how it impacts the implementation of CEIEs. Already I referred in chapter two to a comprehensive study by Grace and O’Keefe (2007) who identified ten areas where research in Catholic education needs to focus greater attention. Three of those which I think will be prominent especially in Canadian Catholic educational research will be in the areas of the distinctiveness of Catholic education in the face of cultural change, the development of new forms of dialogue and conversation among educators and school boards and trustees on the identity and mission of Catholic education; and how to integrate the voices of teachers and students in developing experiential learning which reflect the context of the students. It was found out in the course of this research that because of the nature of belief systems and practices, it is hard to quantify and weight the Catholic identity and culture of Catholic schools. Beyond the kind of affinity and loyalty students and teachers show to Catholic sacraments like Mass and Catholic prayers, it is difficult to find out if their commitment or lack of attachment to Catholic social ethics is the cause of the effete implementation of the CEIE in the schools.

Another area of further research in this area is the area of prejudice reduction. However, there are no indices for tracking the level of bias among the stakeholders in the Catholic school system and how to effectively implement a prejudice-reduction protocol in the schools. It should be explored further how the Harvard implicit association test (IAT) can be effectively adapted in the Catholic system in helping the teachers and administrators to gauge the level of their bias to certain segment of the population. I heard many teachers when confronted with the data about racism and homophobia who say, “I am color blind and I treat all my students in the same way.”

But the implicit association test could help them identify their own bias. This is so helpful because if people cannot name the problem with the operators in the system and how the problem come together in shaping unwholesome school culture for instance, the development of solutions will be a will'o the wisp.

More field studies are worth considering especially those comparing the findings in the Ontario Catholic schools and other Catholic educational boards in provinces in Canada and in the US where there is no public funding. More data should be sought as to whether public funding of faith-based schools is a benefit in the long term in maintaining the institutional identity of Catholic schools and meeting the requirements of civic culture and students' success. In the end, the question as to whether a confessionally defined schooling is still sustainable and necessary in our times should be addressed by educational researchers on the future of Catholic education in Canada.

6.5 The contribution of this study

There are three main contributions of this research to scholarship which I wish to highlight. Firstly, the study has shown with evidence using a narrative ethnography that the CEIE cannot be realised in Catholic schools without a whole-hearted commitment to listening to those most affected by educational strategies and programmes: students and teachers on the frontlines. Secondly, this is the first study in Ontario which offers data for understanding and interpreting the challenges facing Catholic education in Ontario and the strength and weaknesses of various approaches adopted at different levels of Catholic education—trustee level, board level, school level, and the level of teachers. The study thus offers a methodological model for conducting similar research in Catholic schools in the province especially testing the continued validity of the interrogative framework for examining the critical and conflictual tensions and battles in Catholic education in Canada. In identifying these various levels of engagement and practice, this study shows that

whereas boards can set models and principles for practices, the imposition of a modular framework on all schools or a 'one-rule-fits-all' approach for equity and inclusivity should give way to a more contextual approach consistent with the structural identity consultation of schools as sites for open encounter.

Thirdly, the study also offers some new approaches to reform of the system which have not been tried before. The reforms proposed are open structures which are offered as approaches which relate more to the experiential base of education and the distinctive Christian approach to education as witnessing to the words and deeds of Jesus Christ. Ultimately, the goal of this study was to show that the EIE and the CEIE are not dialectically opposed to each other. Faith-based education is not opposed to equity and inclusion, just as the secular worldview that informs the EIE is not dialectically opposed to CEIE. The students in schools inhabit multiple worlds these days—secular and sacred, agnostic and neutral all in equal measure. This study shows that rather than focus on what is opposed to faith in the EIE, Catholic educators at the frontlines are being creative in developing practices and praxis of inclusion which have created a healthy school culture at Community of the Beloved. What Community of the Beloved has done can be replicable in other contexts, but it requires a greater commitment to some of the proposals laid out in this research and institutional reform wherein schools have more autonomy in shaping the school identity than is obtainable right now in the Catholic board.

6.6 Conclusion

Diversity and multicultural education through an inclusive school culture should be intrinsic to the self-understanding and mission of Catholic schools. It is the way into the future. Catholic schools as well as other faith-based education whether publicly or privately funded must come to terms with this reality and find an approach which helps them to realise the goal of education broadly conceived. This educational reform is not a movement which should proceed based on political expedience or as a reaction to social movements outside the Church.

As this research has shown particularly with regard to Canada, the approach to diversity and multicultural education in the separate schools in Ontario has been reactionary and has not been properly thought through with clear policies, programmes, strategies, goals and objectives. On June 4th 2012, the Ontario Provincial Parliament passed Bill-13, Accepting School Act which was designated as an anti-bullying legislation. This proposal caused considerable political and public outcry especially among the proponents of faith-based schooling. The same uproar greeted the introduction of new sex education program in 2015 in primary schools by the Ontario Ministry of Education. What is at issue here is that the separate school system in Ontario because of its very nature has significant challenges when it comes to meeting the requirements of diversity and equity within a multicultural educational policy of the state. But these challenges only illuminate the deeper question which the Catholic schools need to answer as to what is the role of Catholic education in pluralistic societies. That answer is still not being answered in a more coherent way through an evidence-based approach to socio-education. Rather the Catholic school system in Ontario is increasingly being seen as constantly in opposition to the provincial educational reform. The Catholic schools need to be more proactive than reactive to school reform and come up with their own approach and show how it meets the challenges of social change in a pluralistic Canada.

Whereas many stake-holders within the Catholic school system (including the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops) are often opposed to the social policies of the governments when it comes to education, there were no generally accepted approaches within the Catholic system which was readily available or operative as a viable alternative to what the Bill was proposing. Many school boards were forced to hastily come up with pastoral and educational plans just about the same time that the bill was being debated. The public disagreement on the Bill between the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association (OECTA) and the Episcopal conference also

widened the gulf between the teachers who are on the field and the Catholic bishops in Canada and rank and file Catholics. This created confusion among the Catholic community about the nature, vision, and mission of multicultural and diversity faith-based education within the Catholic schools. The mission of the Church through her schools needs to be reconceptualised to put at the centre those who are marginalised—the poor, minorities, immigrants etc. This is the heart of the Gospel and should also be at the heart of the Catholic school system. This means that the Catholic Church must be pro-active in educational reform rather than being reactive as if it is now taking the oppositional spectrum of the changing compass of politically defined educational policies and programs of different political parties that come to power.

The debates today in Ontario about the place of Catholic schools as a separate educational board have not helped matters. But as we have shown in this research, diversity and multicultural education can be grounded in Catholic Social theory. It is all a matter of interpretation and application which can be worked out through dialogue and openness in a very friendly and less hostile setting. A diversity and multicultural education and school culture developed through appeal to the Catholic social theory offers the Catholic schools great opportunity to present a different image of themselves by respecting and giving voice to the claims and rights of minority students and by actually being champions for and model of inclusive schools.

However, in order for this to happen the Catholic Church in Canada must deal with her own limited and sometimes exclusive notion of identity, relationship and community, homophobia, and racism. Truly multicultural and diversity oriented churches produce teachers and school administrators and pastors who are committed to creating inclusive and ecumenical faith environments and to the ideals of creating a community of the Beloved by forging shared communal spiritual

identities where everyone is a first born child of God. This requires the conscious pedagogical and practical acts to reduce prejudice of all kinds.

This is why I propose a conscious formation of teachers and administrators on prejudice reduction. This form of formation can be done using resources from Catholic social teaching which has multiple principles on which one could ground the attitudes and ethical standpoint to creating an inclusive schools and practices for inclusion advocated for in the CEIE and the EIE. This way, teachers will be formed to have an open heart and open mind to embracing the new resources on equity and inclusion. The formation should not only be limited to teachers but also to the politicians who call the shot at the board of trustee level. They need to be educated more on the Catholic nature of diversity and multicultural education. Ultimately, multiculturalism begins with a change in perspectives, a change in one's mental block. One powerful perspective given on reform which I think offers a fitting conclusion to this research is from one of the teachers at Community of the Beloved who said:

I think we are doing a great job as teachers. It is such a difficult time for our faith and our school board and our individual schools. Things are changing so rapidly in our country and in the world. I think, you know, we as a group of teachers need to be less afraid of having LGBT students by being openly accepting of them. We should not be afraid of people who are different from us. We must embrace the dignity of differences. I think we need to loosen up a little bit. I'm not going to say in class: "Oh, it's great! Oh, it's fine, go ahead and marry your same-sex partner!" Just like I wouldn't say: "Oh, you're heterosexual, go find a girl!" They did not come to our school for that. There is a richer and deeper hunger in the heart of our students beyond the contestation of rights and inclusion. We need to speak the language that touches the heart and we need to be with them where they are especially those who are searching for their identity and place in the world. I think we need to find a way to become more at ease with our students in their

different circumstances of life. I'm not quite sure what it is and I know a lot of Catholics are searching and a lot of educators are searching. Just especially, you know, I see students searching as well. We are all searchers and it is liberating to know that we do not have all the answers, but we keep on trying (CN 19, December 11, 2014).

6.7 Personal reflection on the study

This study opened my eyes to many issues within Catholic education in Ontario which I had taken for granted as a priest and educationist. The first is that there is a strong resistance among teachers in Catholic schools to the teaching of the church on Catholic education. The resistance does not seem to me to be a rejection of Catholicism as a cultural and spiritual movement but it stems from how these teachings are presented as impositions and how it is transmitted to teachers as sets of guidelines and benchmarks to be met which blocks off deeper communication and interaction.

Second, is how much Catholic education in Ontario has become politicized creating deep cracks in the system. Therefore, if a healthy dialogue will ever emerge among the stakeholders in Catholic education in Ontario, there is the need to reconceptualise the structure of the education system from the top-down approach to giving voice and valence to practitioners' perspectives especially listening to the voices of teachers and students.

I observed that the strategies being adopted for inclusion are still very generic and not properly aligned to the particular context of each school. The structural identity consultation (SIC) theoretical framework of 'real encounter', 'creative encounter', and a heightened awareness of and reflection upon daily experiences in the schools offer a good starting point for reform. As I indicated in chapter two through the work of Baker and Avest (2009), 'critical incidents' or 'tension fields' exist in every school.

This is why the conflictual and critical theory was an appropriate theoretical framework for helping this research identify how and why these conflicts and tension emerge and how one can develop some generalized and specific approaches for reform. There is the need for greater openness and dialogue among all the stakeholders on how Catholic education could evolve especially in high schooling to meet the growing needs and changes in Canadian society.

The other point of reflection is the question of change and the attitude of stakeholders to meeting changes especially when one is considering faith-based schooling. Catholicism has always proposed that her educational mission is aimed at producing disciples for Christ. This was the original intention of Catholic schooling when it started off in the fifth century as parish catechetical schools. Catholic education was not fully formalized until the Counter-Reformation movement of the late 17th century which had an idea of Catholic education as a fortress for ‘protecting’ Catholic children from the harsh and unhealthy non-Catholic cultural climate of the world. This was the mindset that prevailed until the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) with its documents (reviewed in chapter 2) on Catholic education.

However, Catholic education—its content and mission—continues to be one of the greatest sources of conflict and divisive debates in modern Catholicism. This is even more complex in those societies like Canada where all kinds of social experimentations are being proposed without clearly defined moral clarification and a comprehensive evaluation of the implications of such policies on society in the long term. What it means is that Catholic teachers and administrators are increasingly pummeled by multiple head winds from within the church and outside the church. What is being proposed here are some steps which one hopes could help Catholic educators in Ontario to meet these challenges with courage and hope, but also with a greater attention to evidence-based data. What obtains now is a very unconvincing appeal to arcane doctrinally informed generalisation which may not be convincing to

contemporary society especially in some of the most contested moral and equity issues among young people which we engaged in this research—the rights and claims of LGBTQ students, the perceived marginalisation of minorities and immigrant students in Catholic schools in Ontario especially black students. My conviction is that the Catholic social teaching contains within it seeds for the reform of Catholic education. However, it must be read from the perspectives of those on the margin whose experiences of alienation and exclusion challenge all stakeholders in Catholic education in Ontario and elsewhere to make an option for the poor.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide and Questions for individual respondents (school administrators, parents, teachers and students representatives):

1. *Diversity and Multicultural Education: Strategy and Programs*
 - a. What is multicultural education in the CEIE and EIE?
 - b. What does multicultural education mean to you as an educator?
 - c. Can you share with me some of the strategies of the board on faith-based diversity and multicultural education?
 - d. What are the specific approaches advocated in the strategy which you find most helpful and why?
 - e. What are the aspects of the approaches which you find most unhelpful and why?
 - f. Are you satisfied with your school's inclusive education? Give reasons for your answer.
2. *Challenges and Opportunities for Diversity and Multicultural Education in a Separate School Board*
 - a. Do you have homosexual students in your school?
 - b. Are there Black students in your school?
 - c. Do you think that you are equipped by the board or school to deliver the curriculum to them?
 - d. Do you think that the school culture is inclusive and accepting of these minority students?
 - e. Tell me what programs and activities curricular and extra-curricular that support you answer?
 - f. What are the limitations you identify in yourself/your board/your school with regard to minorities with special reference to students with

homosexual orientation and black students?

- g. The Toronto Public School Board has a Black only school, what do you think of this approach to diversity and equity and do you think the

Catholic board needs to adopt the same approach? Give reasons for your answer.

3. Possible Reform of the School Policy and Program

- a. What will you like to see happen in your school in creating a more inclusive school culture?

Appendix B

Interview Question for focus groups (chaplains, and teachers and champions of social justice and diversity and multicultural programs coordinator) in Community of the Beloved Catholic High School.

1. What is the greatest challenge you face as a chaplain and social justice and diversity and multicultural education champion in diversity and equity education in the Catholic school? For each item identified, what do you suggest can be done to address these challenges?
 - a. Inadequate understanding of Board/school strategy on diversity and multicultural education
 - b. Inadequate understanding of ministry of education diversity and equity strategy.
 - c. Disagreement with Board/school strategy on diversity and multicultural education
 - d. Inadequate preparation at the teachers' college for teaching for diversity and multiculturalism in Catholic schools.
 - e. Personal bias and prejudice towards minorities
 - f. Disagreement with the position of the Catholic Church on social issues in the Church Social Teaching
 - g. Disagreement with the ministry of education's equity and diversity strategy
 - h. Other.....give details
2. Do you think that Catholic Approaches to religious education and social issues needs to change in order to improve the board/school strategies and programs on diversity and multicultural education?
3. Share with me some of the social justice programs which you adopt in your school and shed some light on what went in the formulation of those programs?
4. How do you help to create an inclusive school culture in your school?

5. What tools do you use in prejudice reduction in your teaching?

Appendix c: Consent Form to all participants in interview and focus group discussion

174-99 Bristol Road East
Mississauga, Ontario, L4Z 3P4

March 23, 2014

Consent Form

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study which is a doctoral thesis project in socio-education at the University of South Africa. I am examining in this project the challenges and opportunities of equity and inclusive education in the Catholic District School Board. I hope to learn from you the challenges and opportunities which you identify in your school's faith-based programs and strategy for diversity and multicultural education. You have been selected because you are a stake holder in the success of the board's equity and diversity policies and programs. This research is aimed at developing some best practices in equity and diversity education for Catholic schools in Ontario through an ethnographic study of selected high schools in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Through this study, I hope to identify through the participants in this research some of the strengths and challenges of different approaches to faith-based equity and multicultural education and possible areas of improvement.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to refuse to participate or to withdraw your consent to participate in this research at any time through email or letter or text message to my cell without penalty or prejudice. Your privacy will be protected because the responses will be anonymized through codes and numbering system and they will be delinked to prevent any lead that could identify you as a participant in this project. All

identifiers will be removed in the final report and you are free to determine before signing this consent form how you wish your data to be used.

This interview will be taped, but all the data collected directly from you during the interview will be deleted from the tape and from the password-protected file in my personal computer and will not be stored in any way except through the documentations in the final report. Each participant may decide to see the final transcript of the interview before it is used in the research.

If you have any questions about the study or your participation, please contact me at the information provided below. You may also contact the USMC's delegated research ethics reviewer Prof Dennis O'Hara (dennis.ohara@utoronto.ca) or my thesis director at the University of South Africa, Prof Mishack Gumbo (gumbomt@unisa.ac.za) if you have any concerns about this research or the protocol for your participation. I would like to thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,

Stan Chu Ilo

University of St Michael's College, University of Toronto

Stanch.ilo@utoronto.ca

416-886-0444

Appendix D

Agreement to Participate and Confidentiality Agreement

I.....agree to participate in this research in interview, focused group discussion and social justice and diversity and multicultural activities and programs covered by this research. I have been apprised of the conditions for participation and I agree to these conditions while reserving the right to withdraw from participation at any time. I also agree to the confidentiality of the materials and information which might be shared in the course of this research.

.....

Signed participant

Date.....

Appendix E

Parental Consent Pro-forma of the Catholic District School Board

I-----, hereby give my
consent to

(Name of Parent/Guardian)

Stan Chu Ilo for my child

----- of -----

(name of student)

(name of school)

To participate in the focus group discussion and diversity and multicultural activities and programs of the social justice and the school council committees in connection with the doctoral research of Fr Stan Chu Ilo titled: **Embracing Diversity and Multicultural Education Ontario's Separate Schools: Challenges and Opportunities** from October 1-December 23, 2014.

At -----

(Community of the Beloved High School, Toronto)

I also consent to my child participating in all activities approved by the school for this research as part of the social justice committee and chaplaincy approved programs on diversity and multicultural education.

Signature of Parent

Date.....

Appendix F:

Code of Conduct and Process for Research in the Catholic District School Board

2013-2014

Application Process

Any person who wants to conduct research activities in the Catholic District School Board (CDSB) must submit an application to the Board for approval. This includes people or agencies that plan to recruit research participants from schools and conduct the research off CDSB premises. Send three copies of all documentation, as described below, to the attention Catholic District School Education Centre. **For legal reasons, please submit paper copies of all documentation with your original signature; faxed or e-mailed applications cannot be accepted.**

The Director will inform applicants of the decision of the CDSB Research Review Committee by mail. Applicants who receive approval at the Board level must then contact the Principal(s) of the school(s) in which they want to conduct research. *Principals have the prerogative to decide whether or not a research project will be conducted in their school. Approval of research projects by the Board, while mandatory, does not oblige the principal to accept the project in his or her school.* Applicants must present the letter of approval and a one-page summary describing the project to the principal prior to obtaining school approval.

Police Reference Check

As a result of changes in the Education Act, many researchers will be required to complete a Police Reference Check prior to commencing their research. This includes all those who will be in direct contact with students.

Applications from University/College Students

Usually, student applications are accepted only for Master's and Doctoral theses that have been approved by their supervising faculty. Students conducting other research, including undergraduates engaged in theses or independent research projects, may ask their supervising professor to submit the application on their behalf if the proposed project is part of the professor's ongoing research program. All such projects are to involve current, original research and must be signed by thesis advisors or supervising faculty members. A supervisor's signature constitutes acceptance of responsibility for the conduct of the research.

Modification of Approved Research/Extension of Time to Complete Research Projects

Permission may be granted to conduct the research as described in the application only for one school year. Multi-year projects require completion of a renewal form. Modifications to the approved research require permission from the Board, and may require a separate application. Inquiries regarding the above should be submitted to the Research Review Committee: research.review@CDSB.org.

Study Completion

Upon completion of your research project within CDSB, it is an expectation that you complete the study completion form (Appendix A). Additionally, we request that you submit a summary of your research or a copy of your report to the Educational Research Department at CDSB upon publication.

Assistance from CDSB Staff

Board staff cannot provide assistance in packaging and distributing materials or providing other technical and administrative help.

Translation

Because many of our students come from homes where English is not spoken information sheets, letters to parents/guardians and consent forms should be made available in the language spoken in the child's home (where applicable). This is the responsibility of the researcher.

Timelines

The CDSB Research Review Committee meets three or four times a year to consider research applications. Deadlines for applications are **August 31, November 16,** and **February 1,** . Results of the review process will be communicated in writing within 4 months of each deadline. External research activities should not be conducted in the schools **before October 15th** or **after May 15th**

(May 1 in elementary schools, because of the heavy testing schedule in May).

Research Agreement

This agreement is guiding all researcher in Catholic District School Board

The researcher understands and promises to abide by the following conditions:

1. The researcher will not use the information in the records for any purpose other than the research purpose, stated in the request and ethics review unless the researcher has the Board's written approval to do so.
2. The researcher will not give access to personal information about the research in a form in which the individual to whom it relates can be identified.

3. Before disclosing information to persons and human subject in the research, the researcher will enter into an agreement with them that they will not disclose their name to anyone.
4. The researcher will keep the information in a physically secure location to which access is given only to the researcher
5. The researcher will remove all identifiers in the information to persons or schools where the research was conducted before the circulation or publication of the research findings
6. The researcher will not contact any individual to whom personal information relates, directly or indirectly, without the prior authority of the Board.

7. The researcher will assure that no personal information will be used or disclosed in a form in which the individual to whom it relates can be identified without the written authority of the Board.
8. The researcher will notify the Board in writing immediately upon becoming aware that any of the conditions set out in this agreement has been breached.